People of Ancient Assyria

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Forword

AM indebted to Professor M. E. L. Mallowan, Director of the British School of Archaeology in Iraq (Gertrude Bell Memorial), for permission to reproduce photographs I took during the excavations at Nimrud.

The three maps in this book were prepared by M. E. Knop, Chief Topographical Officer of the Geodetic Institute, Copenhagen, on the basis of my sketches. My sincere thanks are due to him for this outstanding contribution.

Danish Oriental research owes a considerable debt to the Egyptologist, Professor C. E. Sander-Hansen, Ph.D. In thankful recognition of his interest and support over many years, I beg Professor Sander-Hansen to accept the dedication of this book to himself.

J. L.

Introduction

AS Assyria merely a more brutal, more uncivilized and less interesting offshoot of the culture created by Sumerians and Babylonians in Southern Mesopotamia at the dawn of history? Do the countless Assyrian reliefs that fill our museums give a complete picture of the phenomenon that was Assyria? Was the contribution of this people to world culture merely an incredibly effective military organization? Is it a true picture of Assyria that the reliefs and annals give us, with their presentation of war chariots, archers, battering-rams surrounding besieged cities, the punishment of prisoners of war, and the triumphal march of the Assyrian army through the realms of the Near East? Have we no evidence of the human element behind this phenomenon? How far may we rely on the Biblical descriptions of the cruelty of the Assyrian armies and the depravity of Assyrian cities? How are we, who can look back on the incredible events of the European wars of religion, on the conduct of Europeans towards the Indians of America, and on man's recent treatment of his fellow-man, to judge these Assyrians? The rather answer to many of these questions is to be sought they in the personal documents of the time than in the official inscriptions, in the letters Assyrians wrote to one another rather than in the annals of their rulers. Truth resides more often in the letters from one human being to another; distortion of facts often insinuates itself more easily into public proclamations intended for contemporary or subsequent acceptance. Therefore, in an attempt to rehabilitate the Assyrians and to provide a truer picture on which to base their reputation, their official inscriptions are, with few exceptions, excluded from this book. The basis of presentation here consists of historical sources that must in every respect be regarded as primary, namely the correspondence discovered in excavating the archives of Assyrian kings and governors.

It is impossible to offer such a presentation without mentioning the achievements of a number of Assyriologists. The Mari letters that form the basis of Chapter III (n) have been published and edited by a group of French and Belgian scholars among whom G. Dossin, of Liege, must have pride of place. His collaborators in the publication of these archives have been C. F.

Jean of Paris, J. R. Kupper of Liege, J. Bottero of Paris, and A. Finet of Charleroi, whose work, published in the series Archives Royales de Mari I-VI (Paris, 1950-54) and XV (Paris, 1954), has been used as the basis of the present account. To this must be added a long sequence of articles in the periodicals Syria and Revue d'Assyriologie. J. R. Kupper has undertaken a special investigation of the Bedouin in the Mari area in his book Les Nomades en Mesopotamie au temps des Rois de Mari (Paris, 1957). This is supplemented in respect of the Isin-Larsa period by Dietz Otto Edzard: Die 'Ziveite Zwischen.Zeit' Babyloniens (Wiesbaden, 1957). The inscriptions from Nimrud (the Assurnasirpal stele, pp. 58 ff., and Esarhaddon's treaty with the Mede Ramataia, pp. 65 ff.) were first dealt with by D. J. Wiseman (then of the British Museum) in the periodical Iraq (Vols. 14 [1952], pp. 24-44, and 20 [1958], pp. 1-99, with Plates 1-53, respectively).

The Sargon Chronicle translated on was published by L. W. King in Chronicles Concerning Early Babylonian Kings, II, pp. 113-119 (London, 1907); the Sargon inscription was first published by A. Poebel in Historical and Grammatical Texts (Philadelphia, 1914) as No. 34. The Sumerian king-list quoted in Chapter II was edited by T. Jacobsen in The Sumerian King List (Chicago, 1939), while the Assyrian king-list used in Chapter III was edited by I. J. Gelb in the Journal of Near Eastern Studies, Vol. 13, pp. 209-230 (Chicago, 1954). The text of the Old Akkadian letter mentioning the first appearance of the Gutians in Mesopotamia was published by S. Smith in the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, in connexion with his article Notes on the Gutian Period in the volume for 1932, pp. 295-308. The Sumerian and Babylonian year-names used for dating in southern Mesopotamia have been collected and discussed by the German scholar A. Ungnad in Reallexikon der Assyriologie, xii Vol. II (Berlin-Leipzig, 1938), under the entry 'Datenlisten' (pp. 131-196); the Assyrian eponym-lists (catalogues of officials holding the post of limmu, used for dating in northern Mesopotamia) have been treated by Ungnad under the entry 'Eponymen' of the same work (pp. 412-457). For the neo-Assyrian period the last-named article is supplemented by Margarete Falkner's important contribution, Die Eponymen der spatassyrischen Zeit, in the periodical Archiv fur Orientforschung, Vol. 17, pp. 100-120 (Graz, 1954-55).

The latest history of the kingdom of Mittanni is by R. T. O'Callaghan: Aram Naharaim (Analecta Orientalia, 26, Rome, 1948); and that of the

Hurrians in general by I. J. Gelb in his book Hurrians and Subarians (Chicago, 1944). The comprehensive material on Hurrian personal names from Yorghan Tepe has been dealt with by I. J. Gelb, P. M. Purves, and A. A. MacRae in Nuzi Personal Names (Chicago, 1943). The middle Assyrian manual on the breeding of horses, mentioned on p. 52, has been assembled by E. Ebeling in Bruchstucke einer mittelassyrischen Vorschriftensammlung fur die Akklimatisierung and Trainierung von Wlagenpferden (Berlin, 1951).

The grounds plans of the acropolis of Nimrud (Fig. 3) and Fort Shalmaneser (Fig. 4) have been reproduced respectively from Vols. 19 (Plate i) and 21 (Plate xxiii) of the periodical *Iraq* (London, 1957 and 1959). Reports by M. E. L. Mallowan and D. Oates on the work of excavation at Nimrud have appeared yearly in Iraq, beginning with Vol. 12 (1950). The standard inscription of Assurnasirpal was published by L. W. King in *Annals of the Kings of Assyria*, Vol. I, pp. 212-221 (London, 1902). The inscriptions of Shalmaneser III from the fort at Nimrud have been published by the present author in Iraq (Vol. 21, 1959, pp. 28-41, with Plate xii), and a statute of Shalmaneser III with inscription in Iraq (Vol. 21, pp. 147-157, with Plates xl-xlii). A number of the texts from Fort Shalmaneser of which incidental mention is made have not yet been published.

Of the letters from Tell Shemshara, a number have been published in my book *The Shemshdra Tablets, a Preliminary Report* (in the series of archaeological and art-historical monographs issued by the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters, Det Kongelige Danske Videnskabernes Selskab, Vol. 4, No. 3, Copenhagen, 1959). The letter quoted on p. 84 appeared with a commentary in the periodical Acta Orientalia, Vol. 24, pp. 83-94 (Copenhagen, 1959). A definitive edition of all the texts from Tell Shemshara is in preparation.

The excavations at Tell Shemshara undertaken by the Danish Dokan Expedition in the summer of 1957 were made possible by a joint grant from the Carlsberg Foundation and the Danish Government Foundation for the Promotion of Science; after the actual expedition had been completed, the Carlsberg Foundation in addition supported research on the excavated material by a series of grants. The Rask-Orsted Foundation (the Danish Foundation for International Research) made it possible for a number of

the members of the Dokan Expedition to participate in the excavations at Nimrud in the spring of 1957 before their own work in Iraqi Kurdistan. The Dokan Expedition received assistance in many practical ways from the Royal Danish Legation in Iraq and from Mr J. G. Campbell, of Messrs Binnie Deacon and Gourley of London, Resident Engineer in charge of the construction of the Dokan Dam. Thanks to these institutions and individuals are implied in every mention of the results of the Dokan Expedition.

Thanks are also due in another direction to H. E. Niji al-Asil, the former Director-General of the Iraq Department of Antiquities, and his successor Sayyid Taha Baqir, both of whom supported the expedition in its practical and scientific activities in every possible way. The members of the Director-General's staff contributed to making the co-operation between the Iraqi authorities and the Danish expedition so exemplary, both during the excavation and in the years after its conclusion in August 1957

I am grateful to the Carlsberg Foundation for the grants that made it possible for me to travel to Iraq in 1956 to join the British expedition at Nimrud and in 1959-60 enabled me in the course of a protracted stay in Baghdad to complete work on the Shemshira texts which are now housed in the Iraq National Museum. Furthermore, my thanks are due to Professor Max Mallowan and to the British School of Archaeology in Iraq which in 1958 invited me to participate in the Nimrud expedition as epigraphist, as well as to David Oates for his hospitality at Nimrud in the summer of 1960.

The translations of the texts quoted in this book vary occasionally from earlier renderings, though it is not practicable here to give detailed justifications for such variations. The system of chronology (i.e. the dates employed) is firmly established as far back as the Middle Assyrian period; as to the earlier periods, it may well be that future discoveries will necessitate a slight adjustment of the absolute chronology, though the relative chronology will remain unaffected. I have decided that the most practical course is to employ the chronology given in the latest textbook on the ancient history of the Near East, and have therefore co-ordinated the dating with that given in Hartmut Schmokel's *Geschichte des Alten Vorderasien* (Leiden, 1957).

Names are reproduced in forms transcribed from Sumerian, Babylonian, and Assyrian texts where there is no generally accepted Biblical or other form. Thus I have used the name Tukulti-ninurta, but employed a rendering like Tiglath-Pileser because the latter name has come down to us in a Hebrew version of the Assyrian Tukulti-apil-esharra. Sharrum-kin is given as Sargon, Assur-nasir-apli as Assurnasirpal; Nabu-kudurri-usur becomes Nebuchadnezzar. As to the pronunciation of the names and words I have quoted, it should be observed that the circumflex accent (e.g. kin) indicates a long vowel. *-sh-* indicates a sound as in English shall. Special forms of *s* and *t*, such as occur in Semitic languages with emphatic articulation, are not distinguished in this work from the normal *s* and *t*. The Sumerian and Akkadian *h* (often transcribed *kh*) is pronounced approximately as *ch* in the German ach; thus *jasmah* is read as 'jasmach' and *Arrapha* as 'Arrapcha'. *J* in Akkadian words represents a sound like English y in you, but in Arabic and Turkish words (e.g. *Jazira* and *Sanjaq*) the sound corresponds to *j* in *just*.

In the translations of texts, dots within square brackets [. . . .] indicate a break in the original text, whereas omissions made by the author are indicated by dots without brackets. Words in round brackets () provide an amplification that is obvious from the text itself; additions in square brackets [ ] comprise a modern explanation or comment.

Expressions such as 'Semites', 'Hurrians', etc., are used as linguistic descriptions; 'a Semite' is to be understood as a person speaking a Semitic language; nothing is thereby implied as to racial characteristics or racial association. Our knowledge in this field is severely limited and differentiation on such a basis is impossible to establish fully. The existence of a Hurrian population such as is mentioned, is not proved by the isolated occurrence of personal names of Hurrian type; a man with a Hurrian name could have a father whose name was Semitic. The nature of the population in any given place is indicated rather by the fact that the allocation of names, as indicated by extensive textual material, follows to an overwhelming extent the norm of a particular language, and by the circumstance that the spoken language of the district in question can be shown to have been that language. Even where the written language was Akkadian, as was the case for a very long period over very large areas of the Near East, peculiarities of

orthography, of the choice of words, or sentence structure often clearly indicate that another language was actually spoken.

The Plates

The photograph reproduced on Plate 10 (b) was kindly provided by Mr G. M. Binnie, whose firm, Messrs Binnie, Deacon and Gourlep, Civil Engineers, provided the plans for the Dokan Dam, which they built for the Government of Iraq. The remaining photographs in the book were taken by the author. Of these, Plates 7 (b) and 8 (the latter in colour), have previously appeared in The Illustrated London News (17 January 1959, p. 100, and Plate ii); Plates 13 (b) and 16 are included in my book The Shemshara Tablets, a Preliminary Report (1959; see p. 4) as Fig. 2 and Fig. 3.

The portrait of Sheikh Abd al-Halaf al-Ankud (Plate 1) is published with my greetings to the village of Shirgat and thanks for its firm friendship. Both at Nimrud and at Tell Shemshara Abd al-Halaf was the spokesman and foreman of the workmen; at Shemshara, where the locally recruited labour force consisted of Kurds from the villages of the district, the organization of co-operation between them and a small group of experienced Arab workers from Shirqat demanded a measure of tact and acuity possessed by but few. Like his fellow-countryman, the Baghdad fisherman Hassan (Plate 2), he is endowed with good humour, a sense of fun, authority, and sensitivity. Adb al-Halaf's feeling for the unspoken has struck me as incomprehensible ever since our first meeting. Our conversations had to be conducted in Arabic, in which, with uncanny telepathy, he was able to put the right words into a beginner's mouth or read the thoughts for which the Arabic words failed me. His patience, his care, his clarity would provide a model for every school teacher. He has most certainly taught me more than I have ever taught him. He is one of the few of his generation—he was 42 when the photograph was taken—to read and write Arabic, an accomplishment he acquired by study on his own. In Shirqat he took the initiative towards the erection of a school building; after making representations for several years to such high authorities as the Ministry of Education in Baghdad, he succeeded in 1959 in obtaining two teachers for the village. His influence in Shirqat is considerable; as *mukhtar*, the popularly elected headman, he has a species of official authority, but his

actual power is based on the fact that he is head of one of the village's oldest and most respected families. For archaeological expeditions to Iraq the name of Shirqat, and the expression *shirgati* used for its inhabitants, have particular significance. The village lies at the foot of the ruins of Assur. When a German expedition began in 1803 to excavate this, the most southerly of the Assyrian capitals, the foundations were laid of a tradition that still persists.

The *shirqatis* were engaged every year for work on the excavations, which were continued until the outbreak of World War I, and in this way a group of Arab excavators was established whose number steadily grew. Boys who began by carrying the earth from the excavations in baskets were then by way of promotion entrusted with a spade or hoe, later with a brush and trowel. Some came to specialize in walls, others concentrated on problems arising from the uncovering of fragile small objects. The next generation, and the one after it, learnt from their elders. There are very few foreign expeditions to Iraq that do not make the shirgati the backbone of their labour force; almost all call upon a larger or smaller group of these experts, as required, and they are paid comparatively highly. Men from Shirgat are also employed on the excavations undertaken by the Iraqi Directorate of Antiquities; occasionally the best of them are engaged by the conservation department of the National Museum of Iraq in Baghdad. The oldest shirgati working at Nimrud began his career as a basket boy, abu trab ('father of earth'), for the German expedition to Assur, and was for this reason called 'the old man from Assur'.

An experienced *shirgati* has acquired an assuredness in handling newly excavated Assyrian antiquities that a European archaeologist can only obtain from long experience. When a large number of cuneiform tablets were found at Tell Shemshara in a very short space of time, it was possible to entrust much of the work of lifting these documents with complete confidence to a man with years of experience, Ahmad al-Halaf al-Ankizd, a younger brother of Abd al-Halaf. Plate 14 (b) shows Ahmad engaged in the dramatic task of making sure that such a tablet would not fall into fragments of its own weight if an attempt were made to lift it. Cuneiform tablets are found in many varying conditions, partly depending on the quality of the clay of which the tablet is formed, partly on its salinity and on the salinity of the earth that has come to surround it. Salt crystals in the clay of a tablet

have often split its surface and formed cracks that can be sufficiently deep to cause the separate fragments to fall apart when the tablet is moved. Along the cracks the surface bearing the written symbols is particularly liable to damage. It is therefore important for the tablet to be lifted complete, so that later the whole can be treated under laboratory conditions. During an excavation, this is achieved by the use of a cellulose adhesive of a consistency suitable for the requirement of any situation according to the condition of the clay tablet. A contrast to this difficult work of preserving a document possibly of historic importance, of which—as is obvious from Ahmad's attitude there is no duplicate, is represented by Plate 14 (a). Assurnasirpal's 'standard inscription' from Nimrud, of which this is a detail, stands there monumental and clear, carved in stone and indelible. The inscription (also shown on the jacket of this book) is available in so many copies that hardly anyone knows exactly how many there are.

The typical Assyrian can be discerned on three photographs from Nimrud, showing a winged creature with an animal's body and human head; the facial characteristics must be presumed to portray the physiognomy of Assurnasirpal (Plates 3 (b), 4 and 5). Plate 6 shows a beardless court official, presumably a eunuch, represented on a relief from the palace of Sargon II at Dur-Sharrukin, a ruin-mound known now by the name of Khorsabad, lying not far from Mosul toward the north-east.

Iraq, with its sparse rainfall, must supplement the water from precipitation and from the rivers by installations to make use of subsoil water. Plate 9 (b) shows a hoist set up for this purpose. The motive power is provided by a donkey or camel attached to the horizontal arm of the device; the animal, often blindfolded, walks round and rotates the cog-wheel on the vertical axle. By means of this wheel the power is transmitted to the horizontal (underground) axle, on which a further wheel fitted with scoops brings the water to the surface, or sometimes, if the water table lies deeper, by means of an endless chain with buckets. The scoops or buckets tip out the water into a flume, which takes it on its way to be distributed over the fields. Water-hoists of this kind were of course unknown to the Babylonians and Assyrians, for the transmission of power by cog-wheels seems to have been a Hellenistic invention. Representations on Assyrian reliefs and Babylonian cylinder-seals show, instead, acquaintance with a bucket suspended from a pole, distribution of water from which was facilitated by

a counter-weight. Sennacherib introduced certain improvements in techniques of operation for Assyrian wells; but we have no precise indication of the equipment or function of such devices.

A number of dams, some completed, some still under construction, make their contribution to the utilization of river water in modern Iraq. One of the most important dams has been built near the village of Dokan in Iraqi Kurdistan, where the Little Zab river breaks through the mountains in the Torba Gorge. The photographs on Plate 10 show the rugged hills around Dokan, a kind of landscape not usually associated with Mesopotamian archaeology. Plate 10 (a) is a view from Dokan to the north-east in 1957, when the dam had not yet come into use; on Plate 10 (b) the same area is shown, with the lake that formed in 1959 and submerged the whole plain south of Rania. The village of Mirza Rustam then lay at the bottom of the lake; Bazmusian had become an island at its northern end, and the water reached the foot of Tell Shemshira. Soon Kuwari's old home town will be completely lost. On the Shehrizor Plain, where a dam across the Diyala River is nearing completion south of Sulaimaniya, at Darband-i-Khan, Iraqi archaeologists are working this summer (1960) to save the most important ancient monuments before this area too is submerged.

Plates 9 (a) and 11 (a) show Kurdish villages. Aqra, the chief village of the Surchi Kurds, in the Qara Dagh mountains 50 miles north-east of Mosul, lies hidden in a valley with steep escarpments on either side; it is only after passing a final jutting crag that it is possible to see the houses of the village towering upon the mountainside. From the top most houses the *suq*, the bazaar street of the village, can be seen hundreds of feet below. In 74 B.C. an Assyrian king, Sargon H, described these mountain regions in the following words:

I marched between Nikippa and Upi, high mountains covered with trees of every kind, (mountains) whose interior is a wilderness, where passes are awe-inspiring, where shadows spread as in a cedar wood, and where the traveller does not see the sun's light. I crossed over the river Buja, that flows between them, no fewer than 26 times, and my troops were not daunted by its floods. The mountain Simirria, a mighty peak, rising like a spear point whose summit reaches above the mountain chains where dwells the mistress of the gods, (a mountain) whose peak supports the sky above and whose

roots below stretch to the midst of the underworld, that is like the dorsal of a fish, and allows no passage from side to side, and whose ascent is as difficult from the front as from the back-into whose side ravines with mountain torrents are carved, terrible to behold—(a mountain) that is fit neither for the rolling of chariots nor for the galloping of horses, and whose paths are too difficult to lead assault troops along them....

With the obedience and inspiration vouchsafed to me by the god Ea and by the mistress of the gods, when they urged me to sweep over the enemy's land, I provided my leading troops with bronze axes wherewith they broke into the tracts of the high mountain, as if it were a quarry, and perfected the road.

Opposite Dokan is the village of Topzawa (Plate 11 [a]) where a Danish ethnographer, Henny Harald Hansen, B.Sc., had the opportunity during three months of the summer of 1957, with a grant from the Carlsberg Foundation, and in association with the Dokan Expedition, to study the life of Kurdish village women. In her book, Daughters of Allah (London, I960) she has described her sojourn in Topzawa.

The remainder of the plates in this book are described in the text as they occur.

The Written Sources

A SCRIPT was invented early in Mesopotamia. The oldest known inscriptions date back to the period immediately before 3000 B.C. Already at that period the writing material was clay—fine river clay—made into a small cushion-shaped tablet, usually of the size of a matchbox, but quite frequently smaller still. Tablets only two-fifths of an inch square are by no means uncommon; large ones exceptionally occur. The largest known tablets are that containing the treaty between the Assyrian king Esarhaddon and the Mede Ramataia, 18 by 11.75 inches, and another of the same dimensions from the library of Assurbanipal at Nineveh. The written symbols were impressed into the clay with the sharp edge of a flat rod or stylus of wood; the script can consequently be described as three-dimensional.

Originally the script was pictorial. Each symbol meant the object presented in the picture; each symbol was an ideogram or word-symbol. A writing system of this kind has limited possibilities, but in the first centuries of the history of its development the script in Mesopotamia served purposes that were also limited; it was only employed for book-keeping—the establishment of regulation and control over the products of agriculture and craftsmanship. The oldest texts are lists of livestock and agricultural equipment; a system of numbers was soon developed, a stroke indicating units and a circular impression tens.

About 2700 B.C. a revolution occurred in the development of the script. Perhaps it was an individual scribe who, with a stroke of genius, saw that the word-signs could be freed of their connexion with the meaning of the pictures and used as sound-symbols (phonograms); only the sound, the syllable represented by the word-symbol, was to count. The invention of the script can certainly be attributed to the Sumerians; its development as a phonetic script was also undoubtedly a Sumerian idea. A need to write down non-Sumerian personal names could have contributed to the change in the principle of the script from that of word-symbols to that of syllable-symbols; the fact that a large proportion of Sumerian words had but one syllable may have facilitated the process.

With the freeing of the script from the narrower principles of picture-writing and word-signs came the possibility of setting down texts of every kind; and in the course of the third millennium inscriptions appear in ever-increasing numbers and in ever-increasing scope. Ideograms are still used to a limited extent, but in principle syllabic writing has replaced picture-writing. Alongside this change in the basic system of the script went a simplification of its outward form; the signs assume a stylized appearance, and the curved lines of the original pictorial symbols are broken up into single components resembling small wedges, executed in such a way that the head of the wedge occurs at the point where the stylus is pressed deepest into the clay. This writing-system, known as cuneiform (i.e. 'wedge-writing'), was used in Mesopotamia and, beyond it, all over the Near East for as long as the Babylonian and Assyrian languages were vehicles of a distinct civilization.

Cuneiform was transferred to other writing materials, the signs evolved by the use of stylus and clay being preserved in the new media. So we find the cuneiform script hammered into metals, chiselled out in stone, carved on cliff faces, cut on small cylindrical seals of agate, onyx, and haematite, and painted on the walls of buildings. Clay, however, is the writing material in which the great majority of cuneiform texts have been preserved for posterity. Where parchment, papyrus, or paper would have disintegrated in the extreme climatic vagaries of Iraq, clay has remained imperishable. On the tablets usually reddish in colour, elegant little symbols, which in contrast to Egyptian hieroglyphs are made up of purely abstract shapes, have preserved to the present day messages of every imaginable kind; the inspired decipherment of the nineteenth century and the penetrating research of the twentieth have opened up Mesopotamian culture and made such a wealth of written sources available to us that this literature, together with archaeological discoveries, has made certain periods of the ancient history of the country the best documented in the early cultural history of the Near East and Europe.

Clay tablets with cuneiform script are occasionally found in the form of terracotta; the clay has been burned. In this way, the destruction of a building by fire in ancient times could lead to the preservation of the tablet, the heat of the flames having hardened the material. Inscriptions of particular importance were often baked in a kiln, when it was considered

desirable to ensure the indestructibility of the text; thus the clay prisms of the Assyrian kings, containing the texts of their annals, are always found in terracotta and their state of preservation is perfect, apart from the possibility of their having been damaged by falling walls or destroyed by violence. Moreover, they were often buried under the corners of walls as foundation-inscriptions, and have thus been well protected.

Cuneiform tablets are more often found in an unfired condition. Some of the difficulties in excavating such tablets have been discussed above. The condition of unburnt tablets depends on various circumstances. Some tablets are composed of particularly fine sifted clay with low saline content. If they are found at some depth below the surface, and have therefore not been exposed to the seeping of rainwater, they often appear as though written yesterday. One Shemshira tablet, illustrated in Plate 15, is an example of such a text. Other tablets are composed of clay of poorer quality and do not withstand even the least attempt to cleanse them of extraneous impurities gathered from the earth in which they have lain. Salts in the surrounding earth can have such a deleterious effect on tablets that they appear with a crust of hard crystals, and if an attempt is made to remove this crust part of the surface of the tablet will come away, and some of the text is irreparably damaged.

All unfired tablets are baked after their discovery irrespective of their condition. They are put in a kiln for a day or two and exposed to a temperature that is gradually brought up to about 700°C. This transforms the clay into terracotta. After this treatment the tablet can be soaked in distilled water for some days or weeks to dissolve all salts. Not till this has been done is the document fit to be handled and suitable for detailed study.

The scholarly treatment of a clay tablet demands in the first-place experience in reading cuneiform from an original text. Handwriting and personal idiosyncrasies vary from scribe to scribe. It is a far cry from the regular fine calligraphy of the scribe who made a copy of the annals of an Assyrian king to the work of one who had the duty of writing a letter to dictation.

Another essential requirement for the scholar dealing with a cuneiform document is an understanding of the text. Most Assyriologists who concern themselves with the editing of original texts begin, I think, with the reading

of the tablet and the transcription of its text in order to acquire a first impression of its meaning. When this has been done, and the text is understood, it is copied out. This involves setting it down in a form corresponding exactly to its original appearance. For this, a kind of Indian ink is used that is suitable for photographic reproduction. In this way, the text is presented for the judgement of scholars, sometimes accompanied by photographs showing the front and the back, the top, bottom, and left and right edges, for the lines are inclined to carry on in the direction of the writing (left to right) over the right edge, so as to become involved with the text on the other side of the tablet. Likewise, the three remaining edges are often brought into use when the text has occupied more room than originally envisaged. Figs. 1 and 2 show my copy of the tablet seen on Plate 15: the front (Fig. 1) appears in the photograph.

All the published texts of which I have made use in this book are available in editions that have been prepared in this manner. In the nature of things, the primary publication of a text must always consist of the copy made by the Assyriologist concerned. Accompanying photographs of the original text can be of use as a check, but can never be satisfactory by themselves. In the reading of the original the distribution of light and shade can be of decisive importance; it is essential to be able to turn the tablet in one's hand in order to obtain clear contrasts. Although normally a cuneiform tablet is best read in a light coming from a position to the left and slightly above the tablet, sometimes the individual elements of a symbol are so ill-defined that the vertical wedges need a light coming from the left in a horizontal direction, while the horizontal wedges similarly need light from a point above the tablet; only in a copy drawn on paper is it possible to include all these observations in one presentation. Since others who have no access to the original must be able to make use of the copy and base further discussion on it, the conscientious, trustworthy and careful copying of cuneiform texts is a responsible task.

The Sumerian word for a cuneiform tablet was dub; a scribe was called dub-sar, i.e. 'tablet writer'. Both these words were incorporated in Babylonian and Assyrian as loan-words, dub becoming tuppu and dub-sar becoming tupsharru. The Sumerian word was still current among the Aramaeans as tifsar. In the translations of letters given in this book, the word 'letter' always represents the Babylonian-Assyrian tuppu. When the receipt

of a letter was acknowledged, the formula was not 'I have read your letter' but 'I have heard your tablet'. This fact, as well as the introductory words of the letter 'Say to so-and-so; thus says so-and-so', indicate the basic principle of carrying a message by word of mouth; the Babylonian epistolary style has preserved the memory of an earlier period when messages were less often written down than conveyed and declaimed by their bearers.

After the full development of the script, the written letter accompanied the messenger as a checking device, but the terminology was not altered; there are moreover a few cases in which letters to more than one person are set down on one and the same tablet.

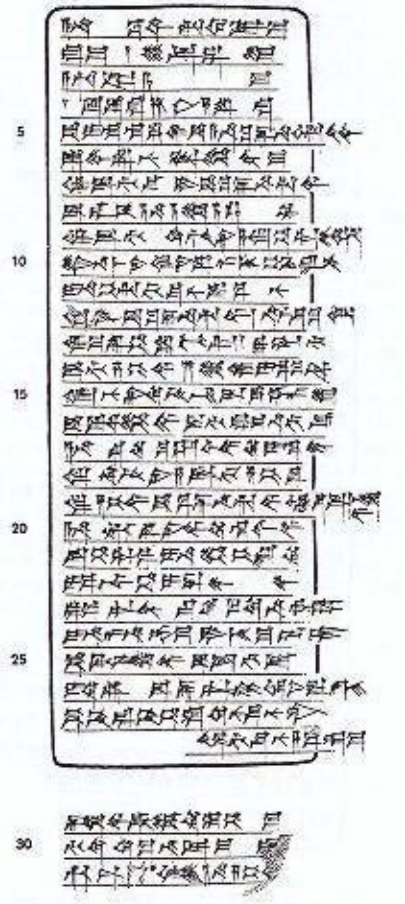


Fig. 1. Copy of Shemshara letter.

Fig. 2. Copy of Shemshara letter.

Continuity and Change in Mesopotamia

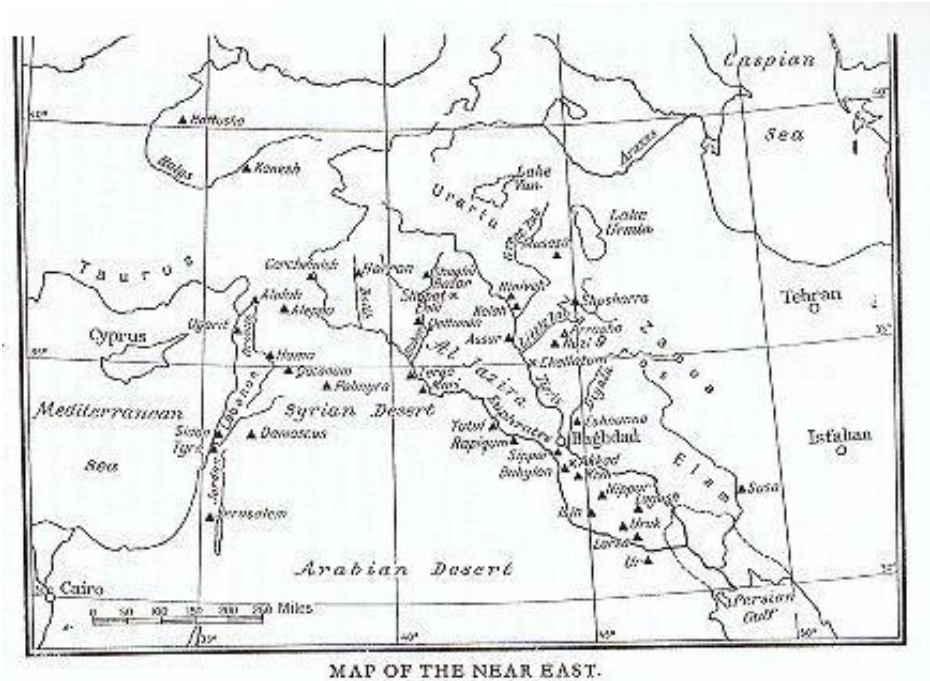
Land and People-Euphrates and Tigris-Cultural Beginnings in Southern Mesopotamia-Strangers from the Eastern Mountains-The Gutians-The Hurrians-The Kassites-Medes and Persians -Migrations from the Western Desert-The Semitic Peoples-The Akkadians-Semitic Domination in Akkad-The Sumerian Legacy-The Third Dynasty of Ur-The Amorites-Isin, Larsa, and Babylon-Mari-The Aramaeans-Islam.

THE frontiers of the modern state of Iraq are arbitrary. To the west Iraq merges into the dusty desert of the Arabian peninsula; to the north caravans from Iraq pass into the fertile plain of northern Syria without the nomads being aware of any boundary-line. In the north and east the land gradually rise towards the mountains of Armenia and Persia; the traffic of the mountain-dwellers across the international frontiers between Turkey, Iraq, and Iran can only be regulated by the vigilance of frontier police patrols.

The rivers were the decisive factor in the formation of state in this part of the Middle East; the Euphrates and Tigris produced conditions under which an ordered society could develop in southern Iraq as early as the middle of the fourth millennium B.C.; the same rivers set their stamp on the special form of culture that we can describe as characteristic of ancient Iraq, and assured a continuity in the structure of society that was not really broker until the irruptions of the Mongols in A.D. 1258. The Greek recognized the fundamental significance of the rivers in this country when they called it Mesopotamia, 'the land between the rivers'.

The ancient history of Mesopotamia is usually associated with the two distinct areas from which political leadership stemmed, namely Babylonia and Assyria. Babylonia comprises the region between the rivers south of Iraq's present capital Baghdad, a land of scanty rainfall in which agriculture is entirely dependent on artificial irrigation, though even this circumstance was of significance in the development of its culture. The establishment of this culture in Babylonia is a good example of Toynbee's formula of 'challenge and response'. Without continual work on the laying-out of canals, ditches, and dykes, without continual dredging of the water channels

thus artificially established, the agriculture of Babylonia would lack the essential condition for its existence, and the fields would decay, becoming barren desert tracts. But if continuous supervision takes place, so that a central administration watches over a network of canals, large and small, to bring a sufficient supply of water to the fields, and to release the fruitfulness of the earth, then the 11,500 or so square miles of Babylonia can be transformed into one of the world's richest agricultural areas. When the prehistoric village societies grew in size and number, when villages became towns, and new societies were established all over Babylonia shortly after the middle of the fourth millennium B.C., the reason must have been that economic conditions in the land improved at this time. This development



MAP OF THE NEAR EAST.

o Modern city. ▲ Ruins of ancient city. x Approximate position.

The dotted line north of the Persian Gulf indicates the approximate coastline of ancient times.

can best be explained on the assumption that the construction of canals and the establishment of a large-scale system of artificial irrigation began at this period. Later written sources make it possible for us to conclude that the villages were controlled by village councils consisting of the eldest members of the community, and that in certain circumstances they could, for a longer or shorter period, delegate their political power to a single man. Larger

buildings, temples on a monumental scale, began to appear, often built on an artificial platform—the forerunners of the Zikkurat, the Babylonian temple tower. Writing made its appearance, a primitive pictorial script, which in the course of the third millennium assumed more conventional forms and became the cuneiform of Mesopotamia. The Babylonian concept of the world, according to which personified forces of nature, the gods, form an aristocracy in the universe for whom men work as slaves, took shape towards the end of the fourth millennium. Art and crafts were taken over by professionals; specialization must have taken place; the increased production from agriculture now made it possible for certain sections of the population to leave their work on the land and settle in towns as craftsmen—carpenters, smiths, and potters. Organized trade arose as a natural consequence of the growth of the towns. Today we know that the Sumerians in southern Babylonia at the dawn of history (about 3000 B.C.) were the people who primarily contributed to the shaping of Mesopotamian culture. They brought into being the material conditions for this early civilization and established the social forms under which it could survive in all its essentials with an astonishing continuity almost down to the beginning of the present era. S. N. Kramer in his book History Begins at Sumer (London, 1958) gives a comprehensive picture of Sumerian culture based on the Sumerian texts that have become available to us as a result of excavation in recent years and of the intensive work devoted by philologists to the Sumerian language.

Assyria is the area surrounding the Tigris on east and west, from the mountains of Armenia in the north to the Hamrin Hills in the south; a flood plain including the upper reaches of the Tigris and its eastern tributaries. To the west, Assyria is separated by a range of hills from Al-Jazira, a barren steppe, where nowadays the Arab Shammar nomads pitch their black tents. Between the rivers flowing through Assyria the country is undulating and hilly, verdant in spring after the winter rains, with a cover of millions of wild flowers; but in May the sun and the drought kill off the vegetation and, like Babylonia, Assyria becomes a brown land where the wind raises clouds of dust and makes the hot summer months a grim season. Nevertheless, the winter rain is usually sufficient to ensure a good harvest even without artificial irrigation. The date-palm, so characteristic of Babylonia, cannot thrive here, but on the eastern hill-slopes the vine and

tobacco are cultivated and cool orchards of fruit-trees surround the Kurdish villages. In Assyria one is always aware of the presence of the mountains; from the tops of the natural hills that dot the landscape as well as from the mounds that mark the ruins of ancient Assyrian cities, the snow-clad peaks of the Zagros mountains can be seen sharply outlined on the eastern horizon, an inaccessible region whose inhabitants, though under the influence of the plain-dwellers of Assyria in ancient times, were never really subdued by the masters of Mesopotamia. On the mountain slopes east of Assyria a primitive form of agriculture was developed at a remote period of pre-history when the alluvial plain of Babylonia was uninhabited marshland.

Each of the two provinces of Mesopotamia has thus its own individual character. Babylonia is a flat brown desert, formed from the mud-deposit brought down by its rivers in their course from the northern mountains towards the Persian Gulf, a country without stone and with little rain, where only the traces of ancient canals bear witness to the intensive cultivation of former times, a plain in which each rise in the ground conceals the remains of buildings created by human hand. The ruin-mounds of Babylonia, to which the Arabic word tell is applied, show how densely the land was populated in ancient times. Assyria is by contrast a landscape of low hills, of much greater geological age than Babylonia, rich in oil wells, dependent on ample winter rainfall; a country with a stony subsoil, where the light grey alabastine limestone, often used to embellish Assyrian monumental buildings, crops out here and there through the surface of the soil.

The Euphrates and Tigris provided the conditions for the rise of this culture in Southern Babylonia; they necessitated the establishment of a regulated social order. The rivers of Mesopotamia depend on the fall of rain and melting of snow in the mountains to the north and east. The level of water in the Euphrates rises from March to May, and long stretches of the Babylonian countryside are consequently liable to flood; but the extent of the flood cannot be predicted from week to week, or even sometimes from day to day. The temperament of the Tigris is particularly dangerous. Its route from the mountains to the sea is shorter than that of the Euphrates; the latter river can expend its force as it skirts the Syrian desert. But along the Tigris in the spring months, the towns must maintain perpetual vigilance; sudden terrible cloudbursts in the Kurdish mountains can raise

the level of the river by as much as 20 feet in a few hours. As late as 1954 Baghdad was threatened with disaster through a flood caused in this manner. Since then the dam at Samarra has been completed, and now the country to the south is protected against such danger by the dam, which diverts the water into a reservoir in the basin of the Wadi Tharthar. From June onwards the river levels fall; the raging current of the Tigris that has brought the chocolate-coloured water swirling round the piers of the Baghdad bridges now reduces its speed. When water is really needed for irrigation in the rainless summer, the rivers are back in their beds, and the fields must be watered mechanically by primitive hoists which are nowadays gradually being replaced by motor-pumps. On those who are destined to occupy and cultivate this land and wrest a crop from the flood-plain, nature has therefore ironically imposed a double task: to protect and secure their homes and fields against the fearful floods of spring by the provision of dykes and canals to control and direct the masses of water; and also to establish installations for the preservation and utilization of water for irrigating the fields in the dry season—canals, ditches, reservoirs, and pumps. The laying-out of new canals or the improvement of already existing ones were tasks in which the ancient Babylonian kings took a particular pride; concern for irrigation is a continually recurring theme in their inscriptions, and control of important watercourses became a matter of political significance. At Kut, south-east of Baghdad, one branch of the Tigris—today called Al-Gharraf—runs quite separately in a due southerly direction; it is, in fact, a canal originally of artificial construction, the first recorded in human history. A written account survives of its being dug. A governor of Lagash had it made in the middle of the third millennium B.C. to put an end to disputes between that city and the neighbouring city of Umma concerning water rights; the point at issue was the use of a network of canals that tapped the water of the Euphrates to the west of these urban communities. The distribution of the river water over the land of Babylonia has been carried out with varying success at different periods of Iraqi history, according to the stability of the government in power and the efficiency of the administration. The peak periods in this connexion were reached under the ancient rulers of Babylon and again under the Abbasid caliphs of the Middle Ages (A.D. 750-1258).

Just as a well consolidated government made Babylonia one of the richest countries in the ancient world, so did the fertile fields and gardens of Mesopotamia, and its great cities that rose between the Euphrates and Tigris, present to the peoples of the surrounding areas, where man was not endowed by nature with the same opportunities, a goal for their urge for conquest. The history of Mesopotamia is therefore an account of a land whose culture is influenced by persistent incursions from the mountains to the east and from the desert to the west. Among the invaders, a few were fortunate enough to hold on to their conquests, but so resilient was Mesopotamian culture, and so enduring its pattern, that most often the newcomers were assimilated to the native population and adapted themselves to the peculiar habits of the latter; after a few generations, differences were reconciled, and it is difficult for us to distinguish the descendants of the immigrants from the earlier population. It was only the Mongol whirlwind that brought a final change; the conquest and devastation of the land by Hulagu put an end to a social order whose essential features had been established at the very beginning of the historical period, five thousand years before.

The Sumerians, who laid the foundations of Mesopotamian culture, were undoubtedly themselves an alien people who infiltrated into the plains around the lower reaches of the Euphrates and Tigris towards the end of the fourth millennium B.C. The lack of written sources makes it impossible for us to draw any definite conclusions as to the tribes they found settled there on their arrival; though occasional place-names taken over by the Sumerians and a few technical expressions that found their way as loan-words into the Sumerian language may perhaps one day, after closer study, show us something of the linguistic affiliations of these prehistoric inhabitants. Concerning the original homeland of the Sumerians, also, we know only too little. Their language appears to be quite isolated; so far it has not been possible to demonstrate kinship between Sumerian and any other known language of the ancient world. It must be regarded as certain that the Sumerian migration into Mesopotamia took place from the east, and their presence in southern Babylonia as well as their activity in establishing their culture there is proved by a rich written tradition—their own inscriptions and Sumerian literature, which until the end of the first millennium B.C. continued as the basis for all learning in Mesopotamia.

Later irruptions and attempts at conquest originating in the areas east of Mesopotamia did not produce effects as lasting as those of the Sumerian immigration. About 2200 B.C. the Gutians, a people from the Zagros mountain area, established themselves in Babylonia, and parts of the land were under foreign domination for the best part of a century. The few inscriptions left by the Gutian overlords are written either in Sumerian or in Akkadian—a Semitic language that was already being used side by side with Sumerian—and the language of the Gutians therefore remains unknown. Even some hundreds of years later, however, Gutian slaves are mentioned as being particularly attractive because of the light colour of their skin. Gutium—the expression used by the people of Mesopotamia for this race—were barbarians and despoilers of temples; a late chronicle describes them as men who 'knew not the fear of God and could not perform ritual instructions and ordinances'. For the Sumerians, Gutium seemed a 'mountain dragon'. In the history of Mesopotamia the Gutians, who were driven out or assimilated about 2100 B.C., have left their mark only on the literary heritage in which their brief domination is remembered with horror; they contributed nothing of permanent value to Mesopotamian culture, and the sources are too few and far between to make it possible to judge to what extent their evil reputation is due to Sumerian national propaganda.

While the Gutian dynasty was undoubtedly established in consequence of the invasion of armed hordes, a more peaceful immigration from the north-east took place after the end of the third millennium. This movement brought ever more numerous groups of Hurrians into the cities of Mesopotamia. As early as about 2200 B.C. a Hurrian enclave can be traced in Nippur, one of the most important Sumerian cities in southern Mesopotamia. It was, however, in the areas to the east of Assyria, in the eastern Tigris region, that they had their most important colonies, and from the bridgeheads established here by the Hurrians an expansion took place that eventually led to the formation about 1500 B.C. of an empire, Mittanni, comprising all northern Mesopotamia from the Zagros to the Mediterranean. We have some knowledge of the Hurrian language from a large number of personal names, Hurrian loan-words in Akkadian, and Hurrian texts, some of which are bilingual, having translations in Sumerian or Akkadian; nevertheless, like Sumerian, the Hurrian language cannot be related to any larger linguistic group, and stands in isolation. We know that

the language of Urartu, a kingdom in the mountains of Armenia, which caused considerable difficulties to Assyrian kings during the first millennium, was a later dialect of Hurrian; but attempts to trace a relationship between Hurrian and modern Caucasian languages must, in the

Arab from Northern Iraq: Sheikh Abd el-Halaf al-Ankud of the village of Shirqat

absence of further evidence, be regarded as misconceived. Normally the

Hurrians made use of the Mesopotamian cuneiform script and took over the Akkadian language, which they wrote with provincial peculiarities. The Hurrians had no small significance in the formation of the later specifically Assyrian culture.

In Babylonia the Gutian dynasty was followed by a period often described as the Sumerian golden age, a renaissance under five kings of the Third Dynasty of Ur. The country had however for some time been exposed to pressure from nomadic tribes of the western desert; all through the third millennium we find evidence in the inscriptions of the presence of persons with Semitic names in an environment otherwise Sumerian, and one well-organized body of Semites had founded an empire with its capital in the city of Akkad in northern Babylonia (about 2350-2150 B.C.). Defence works in Sumerian cities, such as the walls erected by the last kings of Ur, bear witness to the danger that now threatened from the west. One of these fortifications has the name AIuriq-Tidnum—'He that holds Tidnum at arm's length'; Tidnum was a name for the desert tribes whose plundering activities always brought fear to Mesopotamian cities, the Bedouin, against whom right up to our own time the town dwellers have barricaded themselves behind stout walls and locked gates. The last king of Ur, Ibbi-Sin (1979-1955 B.C.), displayed true statesmanship and skilful diplomacy in resisting the attacks of desert peoples along the boundaries of Sumer; but even his alliance with Elam, the arch-enemy in the east, and feverish defence works towards the west were unable to prevent the fall of Ur, and with it fell the last Sumerian kingdom. The two following centuries are marked by conflicts between the cities in which the desert peoples had settled, and where their successors now attempted to expand the territory of the city-states. The initiative displayed by the cities Isin, Larsa, and Babylon was of greatest significance. Under Hammurabi, one of the most celebrated kings of Babylon (1718-1686 B.C.), Babylonia was for the first time united as one kingdom. Amurrum, an alternative and more common name for Tidnum, the tribes from the desert, who spoke a Semitic language, thus took over the legacy of the Sumerians; but Amorite, the Semitic dialect spoken by these tribes, is only known in Babylonia from their personal names, since, once they were established in the cities of Mesopotamia, they abandoned their own linguistic idiosyncrasies and took over the Mesopotamian cuneiform script and also, presumably, the Akkadian language, which was, of course, a

Semitic dialect like their own, though distinct from Amorite and one with a priority of several hundred years in the context of Mesopotamia.

The military impulse that brought the Amorites to power in Mesopotamia lost its dynamic character under the successors of Hammurabi. The Amorite dynasty of Babylon that made that city into a metropolis of the ancient Orient was brought to an end by a single military event, a swoop made in 1531 B.C. by Murshili I, a king of the Hittite realm in Asia Minor, resulting from an expedition into Syria and northern Mesopotamia. Though not otherwise of lasting importance, the conquest and partial destruction of Babylon by Murshili I opened the way for a new group of strangers, the Kassites, a people from the mountains east of Babylon. From 1530 to 1150 the Kassites ruled Babylon. Even before the fall of Babylon to the Hittite attack, small groups of Kassites were established in Mesopotamia; we find them, for example, engaged as harvest workers. Armed Kassite forces first made their appearance under Samsuiluna of Babylon (about 1680 B.C.). Just as the Hurrians further north had set up outposts prior to a more massive and concentrated expansion towards Assyria, so also did the Kassites find their road to Babylon prepared by the presence of scattered groups of their people already entrenched in the eastern confines of Mesopotamia. The first Kassite kings accepted by later historical tradition as kings of Babylon belong in fact to the period before the fall of the Amorite dynasty in 1531; they may have been local chiefs of small communities in the outlying areas between Mesopotamia proper and the mountains.

The four hundred years during which the Kassites ruled in Babylon are usually described as a period of cultural decadence. But recent research has led to a justifiable doubt as to the accuracy of such an assertion. The Kassite kings certainly took over the Babylonian culture and language and carried on the traditions on which Babylonian society was based; but by administrative reforms and the introduction of a feudal system they supplied Babylonia with a new social ideology. Under the Kassite dynasty literature, too, was formed into a canon; works handed down in writing, many of them going back to the Sumerian period or based on literature of that time, were edited in a permanent form that became the standard for later periods. The final redaction of the Gilgamesh poem, for instance, was the work of a Kassite scholar.

The period following the Kassite dynasty was one of insecurity for Babylon; in it the names of only a few rulers of particular initiative appear, to establish their personality. Assyria began to assume the role of a great power and interfered more and more frequently with Babylonian affairs. Conflicts with Elam, a state in the south-western part of what is now Iran, flared up at intervals without the army of either country being able effectively to subdue its opponent. After a period of dependence on the

2. Arab types in Baghdad.
Hassan, the fisherman, and two sons.

Assyrian kings lasting nearly two hundred years, the oppressed people of Babylonia again arose under the founder of the so-called neo-Babylonian dynasty, Nabopolassar (625-606 B.C.), a Chaldaean usurper. Assyria was incapable, even in alliance with Egypt, of withstanding the attacks of the Babylonian armies, which coincided with the march of Median troops against Assyrian cities. The Medes, an Iranian people, under Kyaxares once more brought the mountain-dwellers of the east into Mesopotamian history. In 614 Kyaxares took Assur, the most venerated of Assyrian cities; after the battle he met Nabopolassar, who had himself led his army against Assyria, outside the city walls. A pact was concluded between the Medes and the Babylonians by which each side assured the other of good intentions, and the armies duly went back home. Two years later, in 612, a combined Babylonian-Median army marched against Nineveh, and the city fell after a fierce attack, to experience merciless plunder and destruction.

The eruption from the mountain areas east of Mesopotamia which the peoples along the Tigris and Euphrates had already experienced in connexion with the episode of the Gutians and the entry of the Hurrians and Kassites was utilized by a crafty Babylonian king, now that the Medes were infiltrating into the land, to compass the obliteration of the political and military might of Assyria. Freed from Assyrian pressure, Babylon experienced under Nabopolassar and his son and successor, Nebuchadnezzar (605-562 B.C.), a renaissance that restored to the city its importance as one of the main trading centres of the ancient Near East and re-established Babylonia as a great power. Huge temples and palaces were built, and at the same time a programme of reconstruction was inaugurated so as to restore the edifices inherited from the past by the neo-Babylonian kings. The processional way and the Ishtar Gate in Babylon, planned and constructed with brilliant technical skill, have come down to us as witnesses of the splendour with which Nebuchadnezzar's architects embellished the capital. Trade flourished. From Africa, South Arabia, and India caravans and merchant ships brought goods into Mesopotamia; but with the countries to the north and north-west communications were maintained by water along the Euphrates and Tigris. Thousands of extant documents give us a comprehensive knowledge of the circumstances of the commercial world and all aspects of the social life of the period of the neo-Babylonian kings. Babylonian science and learning culminated in the works of the

Mesopotamian astronomers and chroniclers. Ancient literature was studied in Babylonian temple schools, and in many cases older works are known only in transcriptions made at this time.

Babylonia, however, was once more struck by catastrophe from the east. Internal political and theological disagreements weakened the country under the last of the neo-Babylonian kings, Nabonidus (555-539 B.C.), at a time when the Persian king Cyrus, following up the example of the Medes, and after partly taking over Median territory, was laying the foundation of the Achaemenid empire. In 539 the Persians began their attack on Babylonia. At Sippar they defeated the Babylonian army, and on 12 October 539 the gates of Babylon were opened to the army of Cyrus without any siege or fighting. The city was spared, and the inhabitants treated with mercy; life continued as before, but the initiative had passed from Babylon to other places and other peoples. The study of Mesopotamian literature and the pursuit of Sumerian and Babylonian learning and religious tradition inherited from past ages was kept up in the temple schools; even about the beginning of our present era, scribes could be found who were able to use Mesopotamian cuneiform, though the lands by Euphrates and Tigris were absorbed in the greater unit created by Hellenism. About 300 B.C. a Babylonian priest named Berossos (the Greek version of the Babylonian B61-Usur) set down in Greek an account of the history and mythology of Mesopotamia as he knew it. A hundred years earlier Herodotus had visited the country and had written down what he was told about its past, as well as his own impressions of what he saw. These writings, together with Biblical tradition, were the only sources available to posterity until excavations well over a hundred years ago began to reveal the testimony of the ancient culture of Mesopotamia that lay hidden in the ruin mounds of Iraq.

This brief account of the part the foreigners from the east came to play in the history of Mesopotamia will have shown that hostile attacks and more peaceful immigrations were alike able to influence the cultural development of the country, without any break with inherited traditions being necessarily involved. Assyria as an independent political force ceased to exist; but the neo-Babylonian kings maintained the inheritance of Mesopotamia. Not till the appearance of the Persian world-empire and Hellenic internationalism, of new trade routes and trade centres in a larger world, did the centre of

gravity of civilization shift westwards to the countries of the Mediterranean, where Greece and Rome were destined to pass on the legacy of the Orient and establish the basis on which Europe has built.

What was it then that secured continuity in Mesopotamia? What constant factor made it possible for the Babylonian form of culture to withstand the vicissitudes of time? How did the civilization established by the Sumerians between Euphrates and Tigris survive the immigrations and onslaughts of the mountain dwellers long after the Sumerians had ceased to exist as an independent people? How did it come to pass that so many of the important factors that together made up the pattern of Mesopotamian culture could be preserved for so many centuries?

To be able to answer these questions we must investigate the role played in Mesopotamian history by the peoples from the Continuity and Change in Mesopotamia two western deserts, the Arabian and its northern continuation, the Syrian. While the above account of the migrations from the east has given us a glimpse of tribes belonging to widely differing linguistic groups, when we come to deal with the movements from the west we must take into consideration a number of tribes that all had one thing in common: they all spoke Semitic languages. If we elect to call them Semitic peoples, it must be clearly understood that although they spoke Semitic languages, no judgement is thereby implied as to their racial characteristics, which were by no means necessarily uniform.

An Arabic proverb declares that the Yemen is the Arab's cradle and Al-Jazira his grave. Herein lies a recognition of the fact that, through the ages, there has taken place a slow but relentless movement of tribes from the southern part of the Arabian peninsula towards the more northerly regions along the course of the Euphrates as it skirts the Syrian desert, a never-ceasing immigration of nomads to the heart of Al-Jazira, the steppes between the Euphrates and Tigris to the west of ancient Assyria.

The study by Assyriologists of Mesopotamian cuneiform texts has served to confirm the correctness of this Arab aphorism. While earlier there was a generally accepted conviction that the third millennium was essentially the period of the Sumerians in Mesopotamia—with the dynasty of Akkad as a unique exception—and that it was not until the fall of the Third Dynasty of Ur (1955 B.C.) that Semitic-speaking peoples were of any significance,

we now know that in some important respects this picture must be revised. Semitic peoples were present in Mesopotamia from the very dawn of history, perhaps even in prehistoric times. This is evident from the fact that purely Semitic names appear in lists of those engaged in the economic life of the country, especially in agriculture, as far back as written sources are available. All through the third millennium, immigration was taking place from the desert into Mesopotamia; individuals sought to obtain employment with the resident Sumerian population in the cultivated areas along the rivers, while larger groups of nomads wholly or partially gave up their nomadic existence, becoming half-nomads with more or less permanent dwellings for part of the year and with an inclination to take up agriculture, or they moved into the towns and came to resemble the town dwellers with whom they gradually became identified. This is a constant process, which takes place even today. Although it is impossible to trace the causes in every individual case, from time to time incursions from the desert have taken place that are of quite a different description; the pillaging raids of armed Bedouin, made against the towns and the cultivated fields in the fertile areas of the flood plains. The word used by the Arabs to describe such raids, ghaza, is echoed in the word razzia, a loan-word from the Arabic, used in many European languages with the same nuances as the Arabic word, for the conception of surprise attacks, the ransacking of house and home by armed bands, and the meting out of summary justice at complete variance with the accepted conventions of society. In the relationship between the desert nomads and the town-dwellers and farmers of Mesopotamia, such attacks were probably often due to the vain search of the Bedouin for fresh pastures for their herds in bad years when insufficient rainfall left the steppes a barren plain.

In the northern part of Babylonia and along the upper reaches of the Euphrates the number of communities whose members spoke a Semitic language became quite considerable during the course of the third millennium; in southern Babylonia, where the concentration of Sumerians was greatest, groups of Semites had similarly become consolidated during this period. Their language belonged to the family of Semitic languages to which Hebrew, among others, belongs, its most prominent modern representative being Arabic. The Semitic dialects that acquired most significance in Mesopotamia can be described as east-Semitic, but are now

usually referred to as Akkadian, a comprehensive term used by reason of the fact that the city of Akkad in northern Babylonia became the starting-point of the earliest development of political and military initiative under the leadership of Semites.

The exact location of Akkad is not known. The tell, or bill, that conceals its ruins must presumably be sought among the tells, so far unexplored by archaeologists, that are to be found in the area of Kish and Babylon, 60 miles south of Baghdad. Even though we have not yet discovered the capital of the Akkad kings, nevertheless by other means—through their own inscriptions as well as documents from other parts of their dominions, and also through later sources that have preserved records of the period of greatness established by their rule—we have acquired a comprehensive knowledge of this, the first Semitic empire.

Developments had made the time ripe for such an experiment. Side by side with the Sumerians, considerable groups of Semitic speaking peoples were now living in the land—a result of the immigrations and infiltration of centuries. Writing, an important factor in shaping and maintaining a culture, had since its invention—marking the dawn of history—by now developed to such an extent that by its means control could be maintained over a complex economic machine, and every communication could be set down; quite large areas could be brought under a centralized organization, and letters could be exchanged between the chancery in the capital and governors in outlying provinces. In this way the necessary conditions were provided for the formation of a really large state administration.

The initiative in the establishment of such a greater realm was taken by Sargon. According to Mesopotamian tradition, Sargon, who was brought up by a gardener, became in his youth cup-bearer to a king of Kish. We have no knowledge of the exact circumstances that led to his taking over power; he overcame Lugalzagezi, a king of the city of Uruk, and 'built Akkad', where he established his seat of government. The king-list, a document edited from earlier sources towards the end of the third millennium, reports that he reigned 56 years. According to the chronology followed in the present account, his accession is attributed to about 2350 B.C.

The name Sargon (Sharrum-kin in Akkadian) is a throne name. Its meaning is: 'The king is steadfast'. In the very choice of this name a whole political programme is implied. The Sumerian rulers had represented themselves as earthly viceroys of the god which every Sumerian city recognized as its true master; the Sumerian state was a city state, an area embracing the city and its hinterland. Sargon, however, appeared on the scene with a new aggressive ideology; a demand for the recognition of the monarchy personified in an earthly ruling figure, and simultaneously the concept that the monarchy had territorial demands extending beyond the narrow limits of the city-state itself. In one of his own inscriptions that has survived in a later copy, Sargon expresses himself as follows:

Sargon, king of Akkad, overseer for the goddess Ishtar, king of Kish, anointed priest of the god Anum, king of the land, the exalted ensi[1] of the god Enlil: he conquered Uruk and broke down its walls; in conflict with the inhabitants of Uruk he was victorious. Lugalzagezi, king of Uruk, he took prisoner in (this) battle (and) brought him in fetters to the gates of Enlil. Sargon, king of Akkad, was victorious in battle with the inhabitants of Ur; he conquered the city and broke down its walls. He conquered the city E-Ninmar, broke down its walls, (and) subdued all its territory from Lagash to the sea. He washed his weapons in the sea. In battle with the inhabitants of the city Umma he was victorious; he conquered their city and broke down its walls.

Enlil gave Sargon, king of the land, no opponent. Enlil gave him (the lands from) the upper sea (to) the lower sea. As far as from the lower sea, it is Akkadians that have in their hands the positions of viceroy. Mari and Elam stand (in obedience) before Sargon, king of the land. Sargon, king of the land, restored Kish (and) allowed them [i.e. the inhabitants of the city] once more to take possession of the city.

May the god Shamash destroy the virility and take away all the issue of the man who may damage this inscription.

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[1] ensi is the Sumerian term for a city governor who also occupies the highest priestly offices in a temple: the symbols used to write this title were formerly read as patesi. ensi can be rendered 'priest-governor'.

The territory of the state of Akkad thus came under Sargon to embrace the lands from the lower sea—the Persian Gulf—to the upper sea, presumably the Mediterranean; another inscription mentions towns and districts along the upper reaches of the Euphrates as far as Northern Syria as being under his dominion. Akkadian governors secured the loyalty of the subject regions with the support of a standing army: '5400 soldiers daily receive their meals in the presence of Sargon'.

A later chronicle, undoubtedly tendentious—coloured as it is by the judgement of a later Babylonian age on certain encroachments Sargon is alleged to have been responsible for against the power of Marduk, the national god of Babylon—gives the following report of his reign:

Sargon, king of Akkad, came to power in the era of the goddess Ishtar[2] and had neither rivals (for power) nor any opponents. He cast his formidable glory over all lands. He crossed over the Eastern Sea and alone conquered the land in the west to its full extent in the eleventh year (of his reign). There he set up a central government. [literally he made its mouth all one]. In the west he raised his stelae. The booty there from [i.e. from the lands in east and west] he ferried over on rafts. His officials he caused to reside (round his residence within a range of) five double-miles, and over all lands did he maintain his absolute supremacy.

He marched against the land of Kazalla and turned Kazalla into mounds of ruins and piles (of brickbats). There he destroyed (even) every place where a bird could have settled.

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[2] The phrase 'the era of Ishtar' must be understood in relation to the social conditions prevailing in the prehistoric village communities of Mesopotamia. For a certain period political power could be handed over by the popular assembly to a single man. Later developments caused this procedure to become normal even when there was no crisis. In this way an institution arose that developed into kingship. In the expression used for a king's reign, pale (from the Sumerian bala), the former assumption was preserved that the reign was actually a period of office of limited extent, a 'term of office'. From the human level, this concept was projected into the divine world as an interpretation of the changing significance of the city deities. When a city gained political importance, its god or goddess at the same time acquired enhanced significance: the 'period of office' of the deity concerned had begun. Ishtar's 'era' or 'term' began when the city of Akkad became the political focus of a greater realm, since Ishtar was the chief goddess of that city.

Later, in his advanced old age, all lands rebelled against him and laid siege to him in Akkad. But Sargon made an armed sally and smote them, overran them, and defeated their vast army.

Later Subartu arose with its hosts, but bowed before the might of his arms; this nomad people he caused to settle [?]. Their possessions he brought to Akkad.

From the pits (under the figures of the gods) in Babylon he took the earth away, and upon this (earth) he built a (new) Babylon beside Akkad. At the sacrilege of which he was thus guilty, the great lord Marduk was aghast and therefore destroyed his people with hunger. From east to west did (Marduk) thrust them from him and smote him with punishment so that he could find no rest (in his grave).

Kazalla is a land in the regions east of the Tigris, between Babylonia and the Iranian mountains. Subartu is a geographical expression for an area that roughly corresponds with the Assyria of later times, but must obviously also be taken as including part of the mountainous region between Assyria and the higher peaks of the Zagros range; the meaning of the sentence here translated 'this nomad people he caused to settle' is uncertain. The last paragraph of this chronicle must be attributed to the theologians of the Babylon of later times, since the city of Babylon hardly existed at all in the time of Sargon, and in any event the god Marduk did not acquire importance until much later. The paragraph seems to have reference to a violation of the sanctified earth used to fill deep pits under statues of Mesopotamian deities, on which in consequence those figures were supported; whether there is any reference to any actual occurrence, with details distorted by Babylonian orthodox interpretation, is as yet unknown. In any case, the condemnation of Sargon's conduct is of great interest. It confirms the impression conveyed by later Babylonian political and religious ideology; for the Babylonians, Sargon was a bird of ill omen, whom they never understood and never wholly recognized as the ideal ruler-figure; they saw in him a man who displayed hybris, and was therefore visited by the nemesis of the gods, namely the punishment of Marduk. It was their northern kinsmen, the Assyrians, who first found in Sargon a model that they could accept, a military and political leader-figure, whose ideas they took over and developed.

From time to time doubt has been expressed as to the historical accuracy of the information contained in the inscriptions, both contemporary and later, on the extent of Sargon's conquests. The doubt is, however, unwarranted. The sites of buildings, inscriptions, and reliefs cut in the rocks in regions far distant from Akkad, all of them evidence that can certainly be attributed to Sargon and his immediate successors, demonstrate by their very presence that the influence of Akkad corresponded to the assertions made in the texts. By the quayside at Akkad, ships were anchored that had come from the harbours along the east coast of Arabia; the eastern Tigris valley, Assyria (Subartu), parts of Syria and even Asia Minor recognized the suzerainty of Akkad, and Sargon assumed the title 'king of the four quarters of the world', a title that expresses the desire for recognition as ruler over all the above-mentioned lands. The unprecedented military successes of the Akkadians were to no small extent due to their novel methods of warfare. While the Sumerians fought in a closed phalanx, in which each man was armed with a short spear for thrusting or made use of a battle-axe or mace, the Akkadians fought in open order armed with a javelin for hurling and, in particular, with weapons that were later to provide the Assyrians with their victories, namely the bow and arrow; such arms must have been as revolutionary in Sargon's time as the atom bomb in our own.

The establishment of the territorial state did not, however, mean that the Akkadians abandoned the institutions that the Sumerians had created and maintained as essential features of their own culture. The worship of the Sumerian deities continued in temples all over the country; a daughter of Sargon, Enheduanna (a Sumerian name), occupied a high position as high priestess of the god Nanna in the moon-temple at Ur, and in some cases Sumerian deities were identified with the Akkadian; where aspects of the being worshipped as a deity by the Sumerians resembled characteristics of the gods the Akkadians venerated, such divinities could be combined and presented as one and the same. By such syncretism the Mesopotamian pantheon became modified. Among the difficulties besetting research into Mesopotamian religion is, therefore, the necessity of allowing for Sumerian as well as Semitic influences in the development of some of the deities concerned. Some aspects of a god's character may well stem from concepts evolved by a Sumerian farming population; other aspects of the selfsame individual deity may be founded on a tradition brought by the Akkadians

from their desert past, and may be common to other Semitic peoples with whom they shared their original nomadic conditions.

A syncretism of another kind occurred when the Akkadians took over cuneiform. This script, probably invented and certainly developed by the Sumerians with ever-increasing precision and phonetic correspondence to the Sumerian language, was used by the Akkadians to set down Akkadian texts. A tendency to divorce writing from the principle of simple word-notation (i.e. with each sign actually meaning the object represented) had already begun before the Akkad dynasty was established. The beginning of the 'phoneticization' of script, i.e. its conversion into syllable writing, can be placed at about 3000 B.C. The individual symbol no longer bound up with the significance of the picture that was its original form could now be used independently of its basic meaning and signify, in quite an abstract manner, the syllable or sound that was in Sumerian connected with the word concerned. The transformation from word-writing to picture-writing, from ideographic to syllabic script, was considerably accelerated in the course of the centuries preceding the Akkad dynasty by a need to set down foreign non-Sumerian names. The Sumerian scribe who had to put down in the accounts names of Semitic workmen was obliged to separate these names into syllables, and to use for each syllable a symbol that, in consequence, appeared in the text with no connexion with its original ideographic meaning; he employed the symbols of the Sumerian system of writing with no regard to the basic ideographic meaning of these symbols. The assimilation of cuneiform to a language very different from the one for which the writing system was originally created was a lengthy process; only gradually were principles evolved for the use of such a system to write the Akkadian language, but even in its most fully developed form, in the middle of the first millennium B.C., cuneiform contains inconsistencies and vital omissions that are a reminder of the fact that it was originally intended for a non-Semitic language. By the time of the establishment of the dynasty of Akkad, however, the writing-system had developed sufficiently for it to be possible to write down any kind of text, and I have already drawn attention to this as one of the circumstances that favoured the establishment of an administration over wider areas; in fact, it was one of the necessary conditions for the formation of a state on a larger scale. The difficulties encountered by scribes and priests, the savants of the time, in the adaptation

of Sumerian cuneiform to Akkadian, contributed to the creation of an early type of scientific literature. The lists of written symbols that had been used since the beginning of the historic period for instruction in the temple schools were now revised and provided with explanations according to various systems, as well as with translations into Akkadian; a whole series of lexicographical works was produced, the forerunners of a Babylonian-Assyrian philology.

The innovations brought by the rule of Sargon were thus accompanied by the preservation and further development of important elements in the pattern of culture taken over by the dynasty of Akkad from the Sumerian city-states. It was precisely the encounter between the Sumerian and Akkadian types of genius, the combination of Sumerian city-culture and Semitic audacity of thought, that made possible the emergence of an empire that was to carry Mesopotamian civilization far beyond the country's own frontiers and was to bring an acquaintance with the script, religion, and social structure of Mesopotamia to distant areas, where it left unmistakable traces.

Under the immediate successors of Sargon—his sons and descendants—the empire retained to all intents and purposes the extent achieved by the far-sighted founder of the dynasty. The king-list gives the following succession:

Rimush, son of Sharrum-kin, reigned for nine years;
Man-ishtu-shu, elder brother of Rimush, son of Sharrum-kin, reigned for fifteen years;
Naram-Sin, son of Man-ishtu-shu, reigned for 37 years;
Shar-kali-sharri, son of Naram-Sin, reigned for 25 years.

Under Naram-Sin the empire achieved its greatest extent and influence. Naram-Sin led his armies into the Zagros mountains, where he gained victory in war with the people called the Lullubum; in memory of this campaign he caused a relief to be carved on a rock-face in the Qara Dagh mountains south of Sulaimaniya, showing him at the head of his army fighting the mountain-dwellers on steep mountain slopes. A similar relief that can probably also be attributed to Naram-Sin has recently been discovered on a rock-face at Darband-i-Ramkan, where the Little Zab

breaks through the mountain range south-east of Rania and then flows south through the plains that the Kurds call Dasht-i-Bitwain.

The reign of Shar-kali-sharri saw the first signs of difficulties in the border areas of the realm. A letter from a certain Ishkun Dagan, presumably sent to a provincial governor, says: 'You shall plough the fields and look after the cattle. Do not say [i.e. it will be no use your saying]: "Yes, but there are Gutians (on the move) and so I cannot plough my field". Set up patrols of watchmen every half-mile and then plough your field. If armed bands advance, [local] mobilization will be organized for you, and you must then have the cattle driven into the city. . . . If there are Gutians who have [already?] driven off the cattle, there is nothing to be said, but [nevertheless?] I will pay you [what is due to you?]. This do I swear by the life of Shar-kali-sharri. . . .' This letter, not being obtained during an organized excavation, is of unknown provenance; it contains, however, the first mention of Gutium, 'the dragon from the mountains'; Gutian raids presumably became more and more frequent from this time on and presented a threat to the power of the kings of Akkad that eventually overthrew the dynasty. After his mention of the reign of Shar-kali-sharri, the author of the king-list remarks:

Who was king, who was not king?
Was Igigi king?
Was Nanum king?
Was Imi king?
Was Elulu king?
Four were kings and reigned for (but) three years.

Conditions were chaotic and the empire of the Akkadians tottered. Part of Mesopotamia fell to the lot of the Gutians, but some of the old city-states, particularly in the southern part of the country, rose again, some under Sumerian and some under Semitic leadership.

In Lagash, Gudea was able to ignore the presence of the Gutians, and to inaugurate a Sumerian renaissance, in which art and literature flourished and craftsmanship and trade were pursued without let or hindrance. The Sumerian golden age, ushered in by Gudea (about 2100 B.C.), reached its peak with the kings of the Third Dynasty of Ur. The founder of this dynasty, Ur-Nammu, united the Mesopotamian city-states again as one

kingdom and extended Sumerian power to the east, north, and north-west; in fact, Ur-Nammu and his successor Shulgi (about 2046-1998 B.C.) very largely restored the empire that had existed under the first kings of Akkad. The period is remarkably well documented in innumerable cuneiform texts dealing with all aspects of the administration and economic life of the kingdom. With few exceptions, the state documents employ the Sumerian language, but it is quite clear that people with Semitic speech were established in the land in considerable numbers, and undoubtedly quite large groups of the population used Akkadian dialects as their spoken language. Akkadian expressions crop up extensively as loan-words in the Sumerian texts, and Akkadian personal names bear witness to the increasing influence of Semitic-speaking families in society. Even members of the Ur dynasty had Semitic names, namely, the last king but one of Ur, Shu-Sin (about 1989-1980 B.C.) and the last ruler of the dynasty, Ibbi-Sin (1979-1955). With the end of Ibbi-Sin's reign, the Sumerians irrevocably lost their power, but this was merely an apparent breach; in fact there had been, right from the period of the dynasty of Akkad, a steadily increasing development in favour of the Semitic immigrants, and the cultural life of Mesopotamia was moulded according to patterns conditioned by the Sumerian-Semitic symbiosis. This is one of the world's most instructive examples of the fruitfulness of contact between two cultural patterns and an argument against theories suggesting that culture thrives best where racial purity is preserved.

We may assume that Sumerian ceased to be a spoken language during the period following the fall of the Third Dynasty of Ur. However, the study of this language in Mesopotamian schools continued as long as Babylonian culture existed; it was used by priests and scribes in ritual and in business documents, and instruction in Sumerian was given far beyond the boundaries of Mesopotamia; in Egypt, in Asia Minor, and between 1400 and 1200 B.C. also in the Hittite capital in Anatolia. The mentality transmitted to posterity by the Sumerian script and living tradition made a lasting impression on the peoples who carried on the culture of Western Asia. What then is the most outstanding debt of Mesopotamia to the Sumerians? If a simple answer is to be given to this question, certainly a desire to create order must be stressed as a characteristic feature of Sumerian mentality. The term order must be understood in its widest sense. Order in

administration was essential in the topographical circumstances in which the Sumerians lived; the rivers had to be tamed, the irrigation of fields systematically organized. Meanwhile the orderly attitude of the Sumerians towards their environment was carried further; their tendency to systematization came to embrace the whole of existence, every phenomenon and all observations. Lists, or registers, were prepared of fields and cities, the various classes of society, and the city temples. There were lists of deities, great and small, carefully arranged according to their rank; lists of personal names, including not only such names as were in fact in use, but also names that were possible in theory without actually being employed; lists of objects arranged according to the material of which they were composed—wood, clay, the various metals, stone, etc.; lists of special juridical terms (formularies), lists of linguistic forms, and written symbols arranged according to various systems. Such ordered texts go back to the dawn of Mesopotamian history, and were accumulated in the course of centuries as a result of the continuous work carried out on them by teachers and pupils. Commentaries are also found. Though this may not have been scientific literature in today's sense of the term, yet we can discern here an attempt to resolve the sum total of experience and observation into categories, a comprehensive endeavour—consistently carried out—to create a system out of experience of the environment. The combination of the Sumerians' desire for order and the restless initiative introduced into Mesopotamian culture by the Semitic peoples from the desert may perhaps be regarded as at any rate a partial explanation of the unusual vitality that this civilization showed itself to possess.

The immigration from the desert, which earlier had made it possible for the dynasty of Akkad to assume power, reached a new peak after the fall of Ur in 1955 B.C. The desert tribes, Tidaum or Amurrum (cf, p. 15), established new states along the Euphrates and Tigris; in the areas east of the Tigris also kingdoms arose that were under Amorite regents. In the period lasting to about 1700 B.C., Isin and Larsa were the most influential cities, and this phase is known as the Isin-Larsa period.

Just as the kings of Akkad had taken over the script that they found in use in Sumerian Mesopotamia, so did the rulers of Isin and Larsa also make use of cuneiform. Their inscriptions, composed in Akkadian or quite often in Sumerian, embraced Mesopotamian culture in all its aspects. These

Semitic peoples acknowledged their debt to the ancient Sumerian period. The written tradition was preserved in the temple schools; works of Sumerian literature were written down and title-catalogues of these works were prepared; collections of laws were edited on the basis of Sumerian redactions, and problems in mathematics and astronomy were studied. Not only were young men who were destined for priestly office, or for careers as scribes in the state chanceries, sent to be educated in the schools belonging to the great temples; sons of public officials, too, frequently spent time in such colleges to study cuneiform and the literature set forth in it. There is a letter of this period, or perhaps slightly later, which a student, Iddin-Sin, sent to his mother Zinu while he was staying at one of the boarding-schools of the time; it is an extremely human document written in Babylonian, dating from the eighteenth century B.C.

Say to Zinu: thus says Iddin-Sin.

May the gods Shamash, Marduk, and Ilabrat preserve you safe and sound for my sake.

The clothes of the other boys get better and better year by year. You let my clothes get plainer and plainer each year. By making my clothes plainer and fewer, you have enriched yourself. Although wool is used in our house like bread, you have made my clothes worse.

Addad-iddinam's son, whose father is bondman to my father, [has just received?] two new suits of clothes, but you are continually worried about merely one suit for me. While you actually brought me into the world, his mother adopted him; but the way in which his mother loves him, in such a way you do not by any means love me.

Knowledge of the history of the kingdoms of Isin and Larsa, and of the historical events that led to the growing power of Babylon and to the ultimate autocratic sway of Hammurabi, is based on cuneiform texts that have come to light in the course of excavations in Mesopotamia since the end of the nineteenth century. But it is due to the archaeological investigations of an even later time that we have obtained some insight into conditions in Assyria, the northern province of Mesopotamia, and those prevailing in the areas round the northern reaches of the Euphrates to the north of the Syrian desert. For this new vision we are indebted to the French

excavations of the city of Mari (now Tell Hariri), situated on the Euphrates near Der ez-Zor on the Syrian side of the frontier with Iraq. Here were discovered in 1935 the archives of the kings of Mari, altogether about 20,000 cuneiform documents, among them a very large number of letters of which over 600 have so far been published by French and Belgian Assyriologists.

An important post on the road from southern Mesopotamia to northern Syria, Mari has been of importance since the beginning of history. Even before the times of the Akkadian kings, Mari had been conquered at least once by a Sumerian prince, and the city was incorporated in the realm of Akkad just as later it became part of the empire of the last kings of Ur. Mari had thus for centuries before the Isin-Larsa period been subject to strong influences from the high culture of Mesopotamia, but the city's own kings bore Semitic names. Mari had been an important, perhaps the most important, bridgehead established by the Semitic-speaking desert tribes and became a base for their further expansion. The prince of Isin, Ishbi-Errs, who took Ur in 1955 B.C., was a man from Mari who had subdued Isin with the help of his Amorite armies. The Mari letters have provided us with a comprehensive knowledge of a local dynasty, whose first important ruler was Jaggidlim; his sway continued to be exercised by his son Jahdunlim and his grandson Zimrilim (*c*. 1716-1695 B.C.).

The Semitic people, the Amorites, that had by now established themselves everywhere in Babylonia, were completely assimilated to the successors of the Sumerians and to the successors of the Semitic peoples that had settled by the Euphrates and Tigris long before the arrival of the Amorites. Under rulers such as Hammurabi (1728-1686 B.C.), the Babylonian empire embraced not only the whole of Mesopotamia but also the border regions to the east, Mari on the Euphrates, Assyria with the cities Assur and Nineveh to the north on the Tigris, as well as parts of the mountainous areas east of Assyria itself. The contemporary reports from which this knowledge is derived are not, however, reports conceived in the spirit of the kings of Akkad; it is only exceptionally that inscriptions of Babylonian kings are preserved that can be described as true historical sources. Following Sumerian tradition, the Babylonian kings, on the contrary, set great store by appearing as benefactors and protectors. In subject cities they restored local temples and posed as protectors of the local

cult; they scrupulously saw to the maintenance of canal systems and liked to describe themselves as fathers of the country and shepherds of the people. The principal evidence for conditions at the time of the Babylonian kings consists of numerous inscriptions giving accounts of the rebuilding or building of temples and city walls, as well as letters exchanged between the kings and provincial governors on administrative questions; so far something over a thousand such letters of the period of the Babylonian dynasty have been published, but in museums of the Near East, Europe, and America there are several times as many letters of the period not yet available in published form. Another important source for Babylonian history is provided by the dating system, the 'year formulas' as they are called. In Babylonia events were dated not according to the king's regnal year but with reference to important happenings, so that each single year was given a name according to whatever event in that year was officially regarded as the most significant. Babylonian scribes worked out systematic lists of the 'year formulas' for the reign of each king. An extract from the 'year formulas' for Hammurabi's reign (1728-1686 B.C.) will show that regard was paid, now to military, now to social, and now to religious occurrences:

1. The year in which Hammurabi became king.
2. The year in which he brought justice to the land[3].
3. The year in which he made a throne for the god Nanna in Babylon.
4. The year in which he built a wall around the sanctuary Gagia.
7. The year in which Uruk and Isin were conquered.
9. The year in which the canal 'Hammurabi is (the land's) wealth' was dug.
14. The year in which he prepared a throne for the goddess Inanna in Babylon.
22. The year in which the statue 'Hammurabi is the king of righteousness' [was prepared].
35. The year in which, at the behest of Anum and Enlil, he destroyed the walls round Mari and Malgia.

[3] This refers to the promulgation of a royal edict abolishing certain taxes and imposts for the year in question there may also perhaps have been a moratorium. Several examples of the promulgation of such edicts are known in the history of Babylon, and a copy of an edict of about 1550 B.C. has recently been published.

37. The year in which, with the help of the god Marduk, he overcame the armies from Turukkum, Kakmum, and the land of Subartu.
42. The year in which he built a wall on the banks of the Tigris as high as the mountains, called it 'The quay wall of the god Shamash', and also built a wall round the city Rapiqum on the banks of the Euphrates.

By such formulas, often severely abbreviated, business transactions such as contracts, conveyances, etc. were dated. The names of the years are occasionally our only evidence for the exploits of Babylonian kings and for the dating of such events.

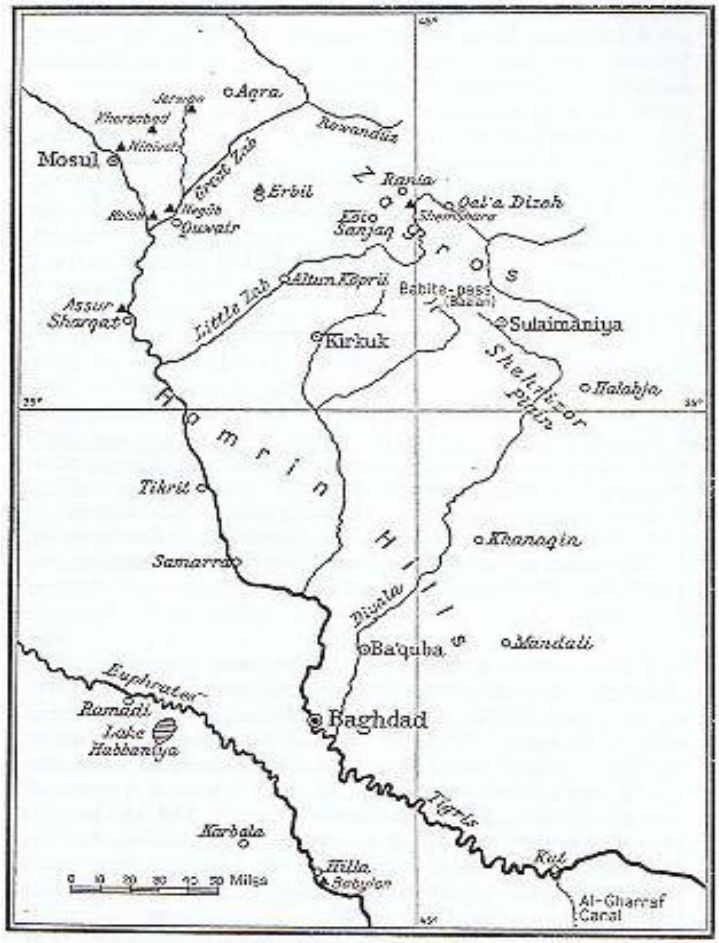
The Babylonian kings of the dynasty of Hammurabi, and of the princely houses that followed—including the Kassites—thus regarded themselves as the heirs of the Sumerians. No break occurred in this tradition despite a new gradual immigration from the desert which, with the appearance of the Aramaeans, began to be noticeable in Mesopotamia towards the end of the second millennium and lasted throughout the first millennium B.C. These tribes, following the Akkadians and the Amorites on the road from Arabia to the urban communities along the rivers, established their own kingdoms on the Mediterranean coast and in northern Syria; but in Babylonia and Assyria they completely absorbed Mesopotamian culture and can hardly be distinguished by any separate culture-pattern from the older Semitic inhabitants. During the first millennium B.C. Aramaic, a West-Semitic dialect, replaced Babylonian and Assyrian as the spoken language in great areas of Mesopotamia; but until 612 B.C. Assyrian was still the written language in northern Mesopotamia; it is only through Aramaic names and the rare cases in which remarks in the Aramaic language and script are appended to the Assyrian cuneiform on the clay tablets that we have any evidence of an increasing variation in the composition of society. The suggestion has been made that there was a similar Aramaic infiltration into southern Mesopotamia, and there is some probability in the conjecture that the neo-Babylonian kings were of Aramaic origin, but in their cultural development they looked back to the past of Babylon, and in their inscriptions showed a predilection for the written forms of the age of Hammurabi; even the symbols used in their monumental inscriptions were often of an archaizing character and resembled the texts of a period of a thousand years ago.

The relentless pressure of peoples from the Arabian and Syrian deserts brought Mesopotamia into the Semitic-speaking section of the world. When, in A.D. 633, Arab tribes, bringing with them the religious ideology of Muhammed, had brought the whole of Iraq under Islam, a new Semitic language was introduced into the country, and Arabic is still the official language of Iraq. But in some places in Iraq, Aramaic dialects are still spoken by small groups of the population—a belated survival of the last spoken language of Mesopotamia in ancient times. Of Babylonian and Assyrian, however, there only remain today a few words, e.g. technical expressions used in connexion with the cultivation and husbandry of the date-palm, but these expressions have, through the agency of Aramaic, survived for two millennia.

The Phenomenon that was Assyria

(A) The Oldest Assyria

Assur Founded-Assur under Akkad and Ur-Trading Colonies in Asia Minor-The Amorites in Assyria-Shamshi-Adad IEkall$tum-Assur and Shubat-Enlil-Terga-Mari-JasmahAdad and Ishme-Dagan as Viceroys-Qatanum-The Nomads-The Eastern Provinces-Qabra-the Turukkaeans-ShusharraThe Defection of the Provinces-Zimrilim-Hammurabi of Babylon-The Dissolution of the Kingdom.



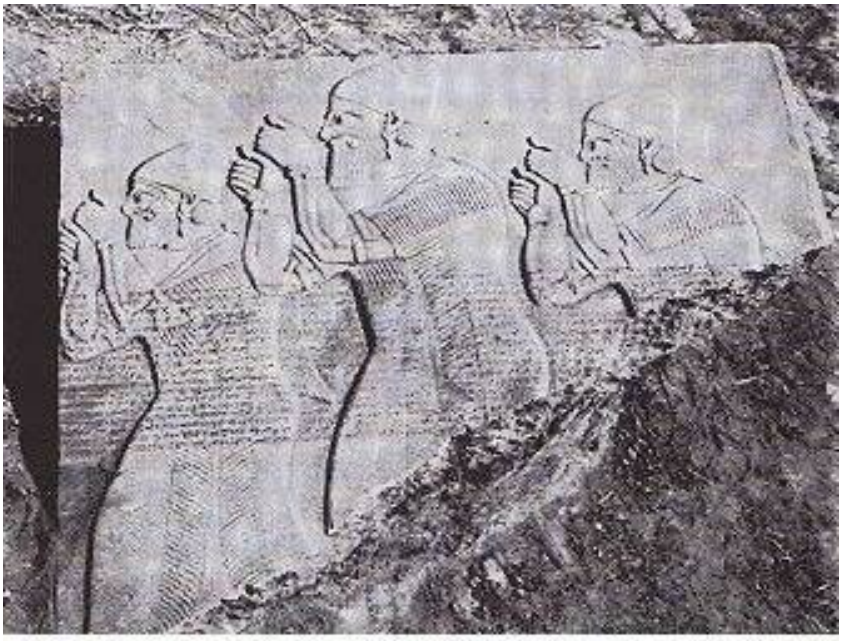
MAP OF NORTHERN IRAQ.

○ Modern place-names. ▲ Ruins of ancient city or town.

IN the northern province of Mesopotamia, Semitic-speaking tribes had settled by the Tigris; immigrants from the desert, nomads from Al-Jazira, secured a permanent home here and early in the third millennium founded the city of Assur, about 60 miles south of Mosul. Until the end of the seventh century B.C., Assur continued to be the religious centre of the land; it was also for long periods the political capital. The city had the same name as the national deity of these Semitic tribes, and the land surrounding it was described as the land of Assur; hence the term Assyria which we now employ, having inherited it from Greek historians and travellers. In calling the population Assyrians, we are using an expression that corresponds to their own terminology.

Assur experienced Sumerian influences at an early date, although Sumerians had not as yet been actually resident there. Assur was incorporated in the kingdom of Akkad at its greatest development; at the time of the Third Dynasty of Ur, too, Assur was in a position of dependence on the south. An inscription from Assur gives us the name of a governor Zariqum, who acknowledged the position of vassal to Amar-Sin (about 1998-1989 B.C.) the third king of this dynasty. According to the Assyrians' own tradition, preserved in a king-list of which two copies are extant, they were governed in antiquity by a series of kings, seventeen in all, who lived in tents; the Assyrians thus recognized that their kings and they themselves had in times past been nomads, and the tribes that peopled Assyria about 1000 B.C. presumably formed part of the Amorite migration, other groups from which settled around Mari and in Babylonia. The dialects of Akkadian spoken in Assyria differed to some extent, however, from the Babylonian dialects; but the relationship between the southern and northern Akkadian dialects and their relationships to the language of the Akkad period (Old Akkadian) have not yet been satisfactorily established. If a clearer picture were available of the relationships between the Akkadian dialects, it would be possible to draw definite conclusions about the historical relationships—the migrations of the Semitic tribes and their mutual kinship—but so far the evidence is fragmentary.

During the domination of the Third Dynasty of Ur, and under its protection, a comprehensive trade-drive developed with Assur as its starting-point. Assyrian merchants thus set up trading-posts in several important towns and cities in Asia Minor. The Assyrian trading-community at Kanesh

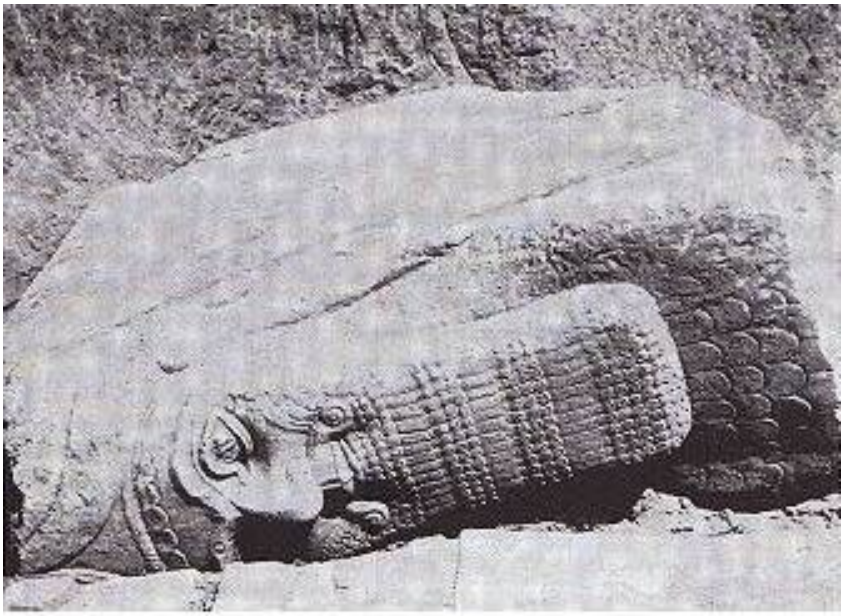


3 (a). Relief from the palace of Assurnasirpal at Nimrud.

(now Kultepe), about 150 miles south of Ankara, conducted a particularly vigorous import and export trade with commercial houses in Assur; Kanesh exported to Assur metal ore, obtained from the mines in Anatolia, while Assur sent to Kanesh finished metal goods and textiles. This trading activity, which lasted for several generations, is known from archives comprising several thousand cuneiform tablets. Besides their interest for commercial history, these texts are also important as being our best evidence for the old Assyrian dialect; they date from a period for which there are still few inscriptions from Assur itself. After the fall of the Third Dynasty of Ur (1955 B.C.), the now independent kings of Assyria took charge of the trade with Asia Minor and of the protection of the caravan routes linking Assur with Kanesh over the steppe of Al-Jazira and the passes of the Taurus mountains. The Assyrian kings of the period emphasized their newly won freedom from the political control of southern Mesopotamia by choosing royal names that revived the tradition of the dynasty of Akkad. Thus, both a 'Sargon' (Sargon I of Assyria) and a 'Naram-Sin' are included in the list of Assyrian kings about the nineteenth century B.C. The Assyrian trading colonies in Asia Minor seem to have had a last phase of importance under

Sargon I. However, the growing power of the Hittites in Asia Minor involved the loss by Assyria of these colonies about 1770 B.C. Political conditions in the land in the decades immediately following are obscure. The Assyrian king-list gives the following information about this period:

Shamshi-Adad, son of Ila-kabkabl, marched at the time when Naram-Sin [was king of Assyria] to Karduniash [i.e. Babylonia].



3 (b). The upper part of the colossal human-headed bull. The figure was later raised (plates 4 and 5). From the palace of Assurnasirpal at Numrud.

When Ibni-Adad occupied the office of limmu, Shamshi-Adad came north from Karduniash; he took the city of Ekallatum and for three years had his residence in Ekallatum.

When Aramat-Ishtar occupied the office of limmu[4], Shamshi-Adad came north from Ekallatum, deposed Erreshum [king of Assyria], son of

[4] In contrast to the Babylonians, who dated according to year-formulas, the Assyrians named the year after the official who (for that one year) occupied the office of limmu. Almost complete lists are extant in which Assyrian scribes have set down the names of the limmu-officials. Lists of these 'eponyms' make possible a very reliable dating of events in Assyrian history.

Naram-Sin [of Assyria], ascended the throne (himself), and ruled for 33 years.

With this Shamshi-Adad the Amorites make their entry into Assyria, and initiate the participation of that land in the interplay of great powers that their kinsmen in Isin, Larsa, Babylon, and Mari had set in motion in southern Mesopotamia.

Shamshi-Adad's reign is dated to 1748-1716 B.C.; thus, in the last twelve years of his reign, he was a contemporary of Hammurabi (1728-1686). As four later Assyrian kings also chose the same name, he is known as Shamshi-Adad I.

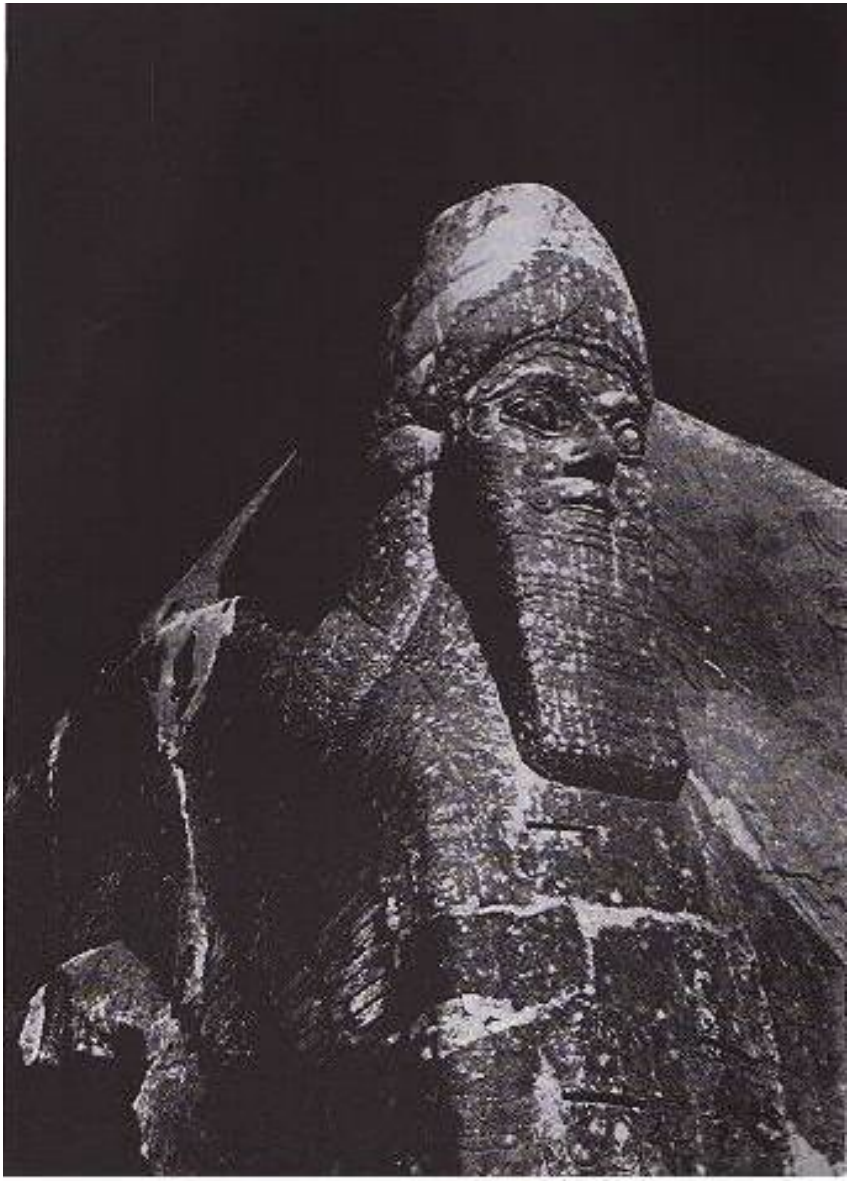
The discovery of the Mari archives (see p. 22) has made it possible to fill out the sketchy picture of Shamshi-Adad I given by the Assyrian king-lists. Now we can reconstruct in many important respects the picture of this ruler, his origin, his personality and his unusual career.

Where the Euphrates bounds the Syrian desert to the north, a number of small states had arisen in the period after about 2000 B.C. Their population was largely composed of half-nomadic Amorites, or of Amorite desert-peoples who had completely given up their nomadic existence and settled in and around cities and towns along the river. We have already met Mari as one of the most important of these cities, and one that during the third millennium had been subjected to Mesopotamian rulers during the expansion that stemmed from Babylon. Only some thirty miles further up the Euphrates was situated a smaller city, Terqa, capital of a little Amorite kingdom. Shamshi-Adad's father, Ila-Kabkabi, was king of this city about 1760 B.C.; but between Terqa and the Amorite dynasty in Mari relations were far from friendly. Although at some time a non-aggression pact had obviously been concluded between Ila-Kabkabi and Jaggidlim, who was then the ruler of Mari, this pact was broken and war was waged between Terqa and Mari with varying success. In a letter found at Mari, a son of Shamshi-Adad outlines the conditions of the time as he sees them. The letter belongs to the period following the assumption of power at Assur by Shamshi-Adad; the section relevant in this connexion reads as follows:

In my family there is none who has sinned against the god; they all keep to the oaths made upon [the invocation of] the god. In time of old did Ila-

Kabkabi and Jaggidlim swear a binding oath to each other. Ila-Kabkabi has not sinned [i.e. failed in his sworn undertaking] towards Jaggidlim; on the contrary, it is Jaggidlim who has sinned against Ila-Kabkabi.

Later on, the letter refers to an occasion when Ila-Kabkabi succeeded in razing a wall round or near Mari. From the other side, however, we know



4. A winged human-headed bull guards the entrance to Assurnasirpal's audience hall at Numrud.

that later on Mari attacked Terqa with more effect, so that Jaggidlim drove Ila-Kabkabi from the throne and incorporated the city in his own kingdom; Terqa became subject to Mari, and Ila-Kabkabi and his family were obliged to flee the country. Everything points to their exile having been spent in Babylonia; of Shamshi-Adad, who at the time must have been quite a young man, the Assyrian king-list, as we have seen, reports that he, 'when Naram-Sin was king of Assyria, marched to Karduniash'. When later on, as king of Assyria, Shamshi-Adad had his own inscriptions drawn up, he used in them the Babylonian dialect instead of choosing the old Assyrian form of language, which we find employed in the texts of the earlier kings of Assur; this fact also suggests that his stay in Babylonia must have instilled in him a deep affection for Babylonian language and culture. It is not unreasonable to assume that, as the son of a foreign prince, he had attended one of the Babylonian schools where young men of high birth received instruction in Sumerian and Babylonian language and literature—a college like the one from which Iddin-Sin sent his letter of complaint to Zinu. There is no means of judging how long Shamshi-Adad stayed in Babylonia, and no source has yet provided an explanation of how he was able to organize the army that made it possible for him to launch an offensive war against Ekallatum. The Assyrian king-list laconically reports that he took that city, about 30 miles south of Assur; later, when he had secured the Assyrian throne, it became one of the most important bases in the southern part of his kingdom. The capture of Ekallatum, however, was probably made possible for Shamshi-Adad because he had behind him an army of Amorite mercenaries, who were only too pleased to participate in such an undertaking, in the hope of the rich booty obtainable when a conquered city was plundered. Shamshi-Adad could possibly have gained financial support from interested parties in Babylon, who saw that their advantage lay in a weakening of Assyrian influence in the northern provinces. This part of the story, however, is only conjecture. What is certain is that, during his stay of three years in Ekallatum, Shamshi-Adad must have prepared his attack on Assur, the northern capital, and that it was from there that he launched the actual assault. Having taken the capital of the Assyrian empire, he overthrew the dynasty in power and proclaimed himself king of Assur in 1748 B.C.

Shamshi-Adad immediately sought to justify his accession to power in Assyria on religious grounds. In the spirit of Babylon, he sought to establish his worth as king by claiming that Anum and Enlil—the old Sumerian gods, who according to Babylonian theology protected the country's kings—had called him to the throne of Assur. Adopting the territorial theology of the kings of Akkad, he assumed the title of 'king of the whole world', and in the victory-stelae carved by his sculptors he closely imitated the heroic style introduced into Mesopotamian relief sculpture by Sargon and Naram-Sin of Akkad; this style was never emulated by Babylonian kings. In Assur he had a temple-complex erected on a grand scale for the god Enlil. The constant assertion by Shamshi-Adad that Enlil had assigned him sway over Assyria finds its ultimate expression in the fact that he chose the name Shubat-Enlil, 'residence of Enlil, for the new capital that was founded in north Mesopotamia west of the Tigris. The site of this city has not yet been discovered; its ruins would have to be sought among the numerous ruin-mounds to be seen on the Jazira steppe, between the tributaries flowing into the Euphrates from the north. Shamshi-Adad gradually transferred most of his administration to Shubat-Enlil: perhaps the city was easier to defend against attacks from the south and east on account of its situation away from the Tigris and the old army-routes.

In an inscription from Assur, of which many copies—carved on alabaster plaques—are known, Shamshi-Adad gives the following account of his titles, his building activities in Assur and his conquests up to date:

Shamshi-Adad, king of the whole world, who built the temple of the god Assur, he who at the behest of Assur, who loves him, fortified the land between Euphrates and Tigris, he whose name the gods Anum and Enlil uttered out of regard for the great deeds (he wrought) over and above the kings that went before him.

The temple of Enlil, which Erreshum, son of Ilushuma, had built—that temple was decayed and I caused it to be removed. The temple of Enlil my lord, an awesome chapel, a mighty building, the seat of my lord Enlil, that stands securely built by the work of the builders, did I build in my city Assur. To the temple I gave a roof of cedar-logs. In the chambers I set up doors of cedar wood with inlays of silver and gold. [Under the foundations of] the walls of the temple [I laid down] silver and gold, lapislazuli and

carnelian [as foundation offerings], and I sprinkled the foundation with cedar oil, oil of the best kind, honey and butter. The temple of Enlil my lord I established firm and called its name E-am-kurkur-ra (that means) 'The house of the wild bull of the land'. . . .[5]

At that time I received in my city Assur tribute from the kings of Tukrish and from the king of the upper land. I set up a stele (on which was) my exalted name, in the land Lab'an on the coast of the great sea.

By taking tribute from the kings of Tukrish, an area east of the Tigris, and from the king of 'the upper land', which must be understood as a term for part of northern Syria, Shamshi-Adad expresses his wish to be recognized by princes in the lands from the Zagros range to the coast of the Mediterranean, 'the great sea'; Lab'an is most probably identical with Lebanon, from which Shamshi-Adad must have imported the cedar-wood that was used as building-timber for the temple of Enlil at Assur.

During his conquests in the lands west of Assyria, Shamshi-Adad did not forget Terqa, the city from which he sprang, and from which Jaggidlim and Jahdunlim, the kings of Mari, had expelled his family. From the very first, his plans must have included a scheme for the reconquest of Terqa by means of a retaliatory expedition against Mari. His official inscriptions, so far as they are at present known, give no information about the date when this campaign was carried out. That it did in fact take place, and that it was crowned with success, is clear from the evidence revealed by the French excavations of the Mari archives. A large part of this correspondence on foreign politics and state administration stems from a period when both Mari and Terqa were under Assyrian domination. The reader of these letters is transported to a period when Shamshi-Adad ruled from Assur and Shubat-Enlil, while two of his sons, Jasmah-Adad and Ishme-Dagan, as his viceroys, maintained the kingdom's interests in Mari and Ekaliatum respectively—a period that, in the history of Mari, can be described as the Assyrian interregnum in that city.

Those of the Mari letters so far published fall into the following groups: nearly 150 letters from Shamshi-Adad to Jasmah-Adad; then about 100

[5] E-am-kurkur-ra is the Sumerian form of the name that Shamshi-Adad himself caused to be translated into Akkadian (bit rim matatim).

letters from Jasmah-Adad and his brother Ishme-Dagan, partly a mutual exchange of correspondence between themselves; and finally a large number of letters to and from officials in the towns and districts around Mari, some from the reign of Jasmah-Adad, some from that of Zimrilim; as an example there are 84 letters from one Kibri-Dagan, Zimrilim's governor in Terqa, addressed to the chancery at Mari. Neither Ekallatum nor Shubat-Enlil has been excavated; it is obvious that archaeological investigation of these cities—when they can be identified—should bring to light archives of the same type as those discovered at Mari, archives of perhaps even greater scope, from which the picture provided by the Mari letters can be rounded out in much more detail. The fact that, at Mari, letters were also found from Jasmah-Adad is presumably due to the practice of preparing two copies of each letter, one copy being kept for filing in the chancery from which the communication was sent.

The conquest of Mari by Shamshi-Adad cost Jahdunlim his life. A letter from Kibri-Dagan to Zimrilim mentions a late epilogue to this event:

Say to my lord, thus says Kibri-Dagan your servant:

With (the god) Dagan and Ikrub-Il it is well; with the city Terqa and (the whole) district it is likewise well.

Yet another matter. The same day that I am sending this my letter to my lord, the muhhum-priest of Dagan came to me and presented the matter to me as follows: 'The god has enjoined me; hasten to approach the king with the message that a funeral-feast must be held for the spirit of Jahdunlim.' This has the muhhrim-priest said to me, and herewith have I passed on the message to my lord. May my lord take such action as seems to him best!

(The word etimmum, here translated as 'spirit', could perhaps be rendered better by the Latin manes, which indicates the soul of the deceased. The Babylonian concept of the realm of the dead, arallu, assumed that the deceased lived in it as shadows, with dust for their fare and clay for their nutriment. It was 'a land from which none returned', 'a house in which those who entered were deprived of the light', where the deceased were 'clad like birds, with wings instead of garments'. It was a house in which 'dust lay on the door and bolt'. Such is the description of the underworld in a myth

portraying the descent of the goddess Ishtar to the realm of the dead. In the legend of Gilgamesh, this hero is permitted the privilege of conversation with his departed friend Enkidu. Nergal, god of the underworld, opens a hole in the earth, and 'scarce had he opened it before the spirit (etimmum) of Enkidu came forth like a puff of wind from the realm of the dead. They embraced and kissed one another. They exchanged question and answer and sighed to one another', and Gilgamesh asks: 'Tell me, my friend, tell me, my friend, of the establishment of the underworld that you have seen'. Enkidu answers as follows: 'I will not tell you of it, I will not tell you of it. But if I tell you of the establishment of the underworld that I have seen, then sit down and weep.' 'He who died a sudden death, have you seen him?' 'I have seen him: at night he lies on his couch and drinks pure water'. 'He who fell in battle, have you seen him?' 'I have seen him: his father and mother support his head, and his wife shed tears over him.' 'He whose body was slung out on the steppe, have you seen him?' 'I have seen him: his soul finds no rest in the underworld.' 'He whose spirit has no one to provide for it, have you seen him?' 'I have seen him: the dregs from the jar, crumbs from the loaf, the refuse from the street, these he eats.' Such is the concept that makes it vital for Zimrilim to institute a cult of the dead for the soul of his father Jahdunlim after the passage of several years, during which, being in exile, he was unable to make suitable offerings.)

Shamshi-Adad's vengeance on the dynasty that had driven his father from the throne extended to the sons of Jahdunlim, who were taken away and put to death; only one, Zimrilim, evaded this fate and escaped; later, when times appeared more favourable, it fell to the lot of Zimrilim to put an end to Assyrian domination at Mari. From a letter of Shamshi-Adad to Jasmah-Adad, we learn the fate of Jahdunlim's daughters:

Jahdunlim's young daughters, whom I delivered to you—these daughters have now grown up; [....] they have become grown women and [. . . .] you shall have them taken to Shubat-Enlil, where they shall live in the house that belongs to you. They will be trained in singing, and when you come here [....][6].

[6] Break in the text caused by damage to the cuneiform tablet. The author shares the reader's regret that, when the Akkadian text is damaged, it always seems to be at the most intriguing point.

Of the brothers, Ishme-Dagan was the more remarkable, and Shamshi-Adad must have chosen him as viceroy in Ekallitum in the consciousness that this frontier-city to the south was in better hands under Ishme-Dagan than under Jasmah-Adad, who was less like his father. In his letters to his son at Mari, he exhibits from time to time his impulsive temperament, when he finds occasion to criticize Jasmah-Adad's arrangements in terms that hardly endear him to the reader.

Say to Jasmah-Adad: thus says Shamshi-Adad, your father. The letter you sent me I have heard [i.e. had it read aloud to me]. Regarding the fact that evil has been spoken of Mubalshaga for the past three years—whether you are willing to defend his case, or on the contrary you do not blame him, let him nevertheless work. You are still young; there is as yet no beard on your chin, and even now when you have reached maturity, you have not set up a home. [....], your house in Ekallatum and your house in Shubat-Enlil are abandoned. [....] .... Now that Usur-awasu has gone to his doom [i.e. has died], who is there to look after your house? Is it perhaps not the case that if an administrator does not carry out his functions for merely two or three days, the administration collapses? Why in such circumstances have you not appointed a man to this post? As to the remark in your letter: 'Sin-iluni is too young; he is not suitable for administration', you could, of course, not know in advance that he was too young (for it). Why have you followed the recommendations of Sin-iluni, and why have you put your trust in the calumnies concerning Mubalshaga and have yet allowed him to work? Who is there here that I could nominate for your administration? Your servants, you know them best yourself. Appoint a man according to your own judgement for your own administration.

In a letter to Jasmah-Adad, Shamshi-Adad informs him of a victory recently won by his brother Ishme-Dagan in a campaign in the eastern Assyrian provinces:

An [enemy] army having gathered in the city Qabra, I sent Ishme-Dagan to the land Ahazim with an [Assyrian] army. I, for my part, also set off for that city. [....] He [i.e. Ishme-Dagan] has annihilated the troops of that land, and the Turukku tribes that had joined them in their sallies. Not so much as one man escaped. On this occasion I took the land Ahazim to its full extent. This is a great defeat for the land. You can rejoice over that!

While your brother has won a victory here, you remain there, reclining amongst the women. But now that you are advancing [westwards] towards Qatanum, quit yourself like a man. Just as your brother has made a great name for himself, do you likewise, in your turn, make a great name for yourself in your own land.

5. In front of the entrance to Assurnasirpal's audience hall at Numrud.

Other letters from Shamshi-Adad contain similar observations: Jasmah-Adad's irritation on receiving them can hardly have been less than his father's sourness in sending them.

As to you, how long will it be necessary for us continually to guide you? .... How much longer will you be unable to administer your own house? Do you not see your own brother commanding far-flung armies?

At this point, however, even Jasmah-Adad's patience became exhausted. Was it perhaps that offensive 'us', the insinuation that not only his father, but his brother, had to lead him by the hand, that caused Jasmah-Adad to send an outraged answer? Is the answer, contained in the following letter found at Mari, a copy retained in Jasmah-Adad's chancery, or is it the original letter which he decided after all not to send?

Say to Adda[7], thus says Jasmah-Adad your son: The letter Adda sent me I have heard. It is the letter in which it is written: 'As to you, how long will it be necessary for us continually to guide you? You are still young; there is as yet no beard on your chin. How much longer will you be unable to administer your own house? Do you not see your own brother commanding far-flung armies? So take charge of the administration of your palace and your house!' That was what Adda wrote to me.

Am I even now young and incapable of administration? In former times [?] Adda was of a different opinion, and [....]. Should I for this reason be unable to lord it over a servant and my house? How was it in former times when I was a child and growing up in the house of Adda? Now it has happened that the servants once, twice, have begun to take me out of Adda's heart; and till now Adda's countenance has been [....]. Therefore I am attacked, and Adda [....] .... But when I appear before Adda, I will say as follows: 'I present myself before Adda; I will lay the sufferings of my heart before Adda; I will take [....] . . . . Meanwhile Adda has not written to me; he has not settled my fate and [....].

Shamshi-Adad's letters show him to be a man of little patience, a restless personality, always active, who had scant understanding for the tardiness of

[7] Adda is a more intimate form of (Shamshi-) Adad, a term of endearment used by the sons in their letters to their father.

his collaborators, and who could only with difficulty forgive negligence in replying to the letters he had sent. Thus he writes to Jasmah-Adad:

I had written to you to send Puzur-ili to me as quickly as possible. You have not sent him to me as quickly as possible. (The time for) the sacrificial feast is now past. Now that (the time for) the sacrificial feast is past, you have [....]. Why have you not sent him to me as quickly as possible in connexion with (the celebration of this) monthly festival?

A hint of irony can be perceived in a letter concerning envoys from Qatanum, now Mishrifa in Syria, not far to the east of the river Orontes; between this state and Assyria relations at this time were those of close friendship.

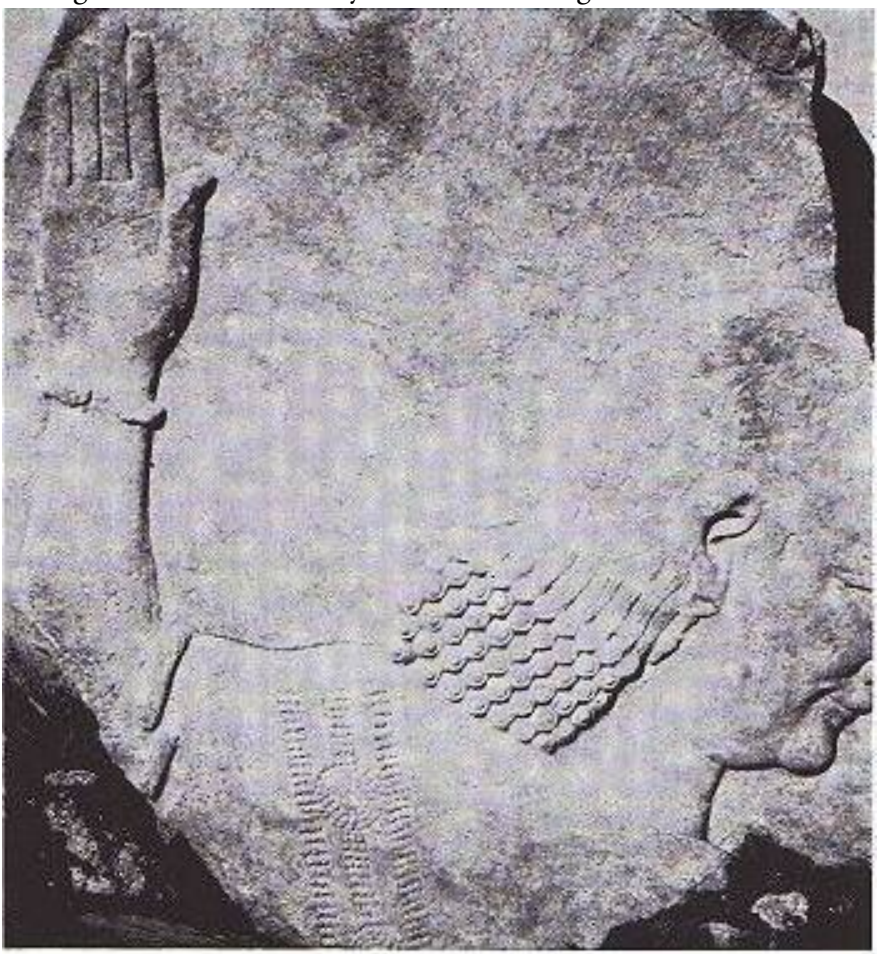
These deeds of yours, are they outstanding? The envoys from Qatanum you have held back until this moment. Why have you held them back? When you have held them back, will they then for that reason behave passively? Send them to me. Presumably you do not make yourself familiar with the affairs of your palace, and have held these men back so that they may perpetually bring you gifts. It is Mutu-Bisir, [I suppose], who consistently works against the business in your house and has kept these men back but even if there are gifts to be received, will these men continually give (them)? As soon now as you hear this letter of mine, you are to send them to me as quickly as possible. They shall [. . . .] to me. Moreover, send Ursaminum to me.

The tone of Shamshi-Adad's letters can also be reassuring:

The letter you sent me have I heard. The letter that Jashub-El sent to La'um, and that La'um has sent (on) to you, you have sent to me, (and) I have heard it. Among these words there is not one that is true. They are all exaggerated. Jashub-El has been informed [....], and he has written accordingly to La'um; but nevertheless they are empty words, there is not one word that is true. On no account (therefore) let your heart be troubled.

His father's ever-ready criticism, perpetual irony, insinuating conjectures and rarer expressions of appreciation can hardly have helped Jasmah-Adad to overcome his diffidence—a diffidence that was perhaps a trait of his character. This personal diffidence was enhanced by the fact that Assyrian domination over Mari, the authority that it was encumbent on him

to represent in his person, does not seem to have been entirely unchallenged. It must be remembered that Zimrilim, the legitimate heir of the Mari dynasty, the son of Jahdunlim, was still alive; during the Assyrian interregnum at Mari he cannot have remained idle. A seething life permeated the deserts surrounding the small Amorite kingdoms along the Euphrates; powerful Bedouin tribes roamed about and ceaselessly threatened the fortified towns with surprise attacks and plunder. It cannot have been difficult for Zimrilim to hide in the desert among these tribes and to form an alliance with a tribal chieftain, who even without such encouragement would be ready to embrace thoughts of an attack on Mari.



6. Assyrian courtier. Fragment of relief from the palace of Sargon II at Dur Sharrukin (Khorsabad). 8th century B.C.

Inside the city walls, there may well have been groups who had a sense of loyalty to Jahdunlim's family and to the cause of the dynasty. Such an assumption provides the most likely explanation for the fact that certain officials continue in the service of the administration after the end of the Assyrian interregnum; Zimrilim may be presumed to have paid reliable dependents who had been secretly working for his cause in just this manner. Jasmah-Adad himself indicates that he had difficulties, both external and internal, when he writes to Shamshi-Adad:

Say to Adda: thus says Jasmah-Adad, your son: In my earlier letter I have already written to Adda about the 2000 men that the Babylonian [i.e. Hammurabi of Babylon] [keeps mobilized?] at Ida[8] at the disposal of [....]. Now these troops have been sent home. As to my journey to Tutul, [....] .... As to myself I have been obliged to concern myself with the enemy inside Mari .... [....].

Jasmah-Adad's personal and administrative difficulties must be judged in the light of the dangerous position to which he was appointed. Shamshi-Adad's comparisons between his brother and himself, invariably to the advantage of Ishme-Dagan, strike us as being in fact ill-conceived, and does not our sympathy go out to Jasmah-Adad when he writes to his father as follows?

Say to Adda: thus says Jasmah-Adad, your son. Adda has written to me concerning Sin-iddinam in the following terms: 'I wish to establish him as governor of the towns Razami, Burullum, and Haburitum. His position (under you thus) becomes vacant. Send him to me as quickly as possible.' That was what Adda wrote to me.

If I now send Sin-iddinam to Addi, who then will be the (other) man to stay here and secure the foundations for this palace? As Adda well knows, the foundations under this palace are not well secured.[....] .... In that I honour Addi and am his son, I will send him to Addi. [But] later, if Addi comes to this city and acquaints himself with the situation [here], and a mistake shall prove to have been made, who is then to be the employee to render an account of Adda? But let Addi ponder over this, (namely) how

[8] Ida is the old name of the town of Hit on the Euphrates; Tutul is a town in its immediate neighbourhood. It would also appear, however, that there was a town on the Balih river called Tutul.

important it is for Sin-iddinam to be able to remain in this city. Do not let Adda say to me 'But of course, you knew all this. Why did you not draw my attention to it?' Now I have laid my knowledge before Adda. May Adda ponder it in his own mind in accordance with his royal greatness.

One of the difficulties preventing full understanding of the letters from Mari—and this applies generally to the understanding of letters where in the main the correspondence of only one of the writers is available—is, of course, the fact that our knowledge of the situation is often imperfect; in most cases we are only acquainted with the answers or the questions; only rarely are both sides of the case available. Therefore the background to the subject-matter of the letters must often be reconstructed by reference to the context. In the Mari letters, help is at times provided by the frequent quotations from dispatches received earlier.

Another difficulty is the question of the respective sequence of the letters; as a rule, this can only be determined on the basis of reference to events that must have followed one another in a particular order. Shamshi-Adad's orderly disposition indeed often caused him to date his letters; thus he will conclude with a remark that he sent this letter in such and such a month on such and such a day—when the day had come to an end, at sunset[9]—and at times he gives a time-limit for the reply, but this practice, inaugurated by him and imitated by his son Ishme-Dagan, though not known to have been employed by other Mesopotamian correspondents, was not carried through consistently enough for us to be able by its means to establish a relative chronology for the Mari letters.

In the following letter, for example, illustrating how Ishme-Dagan could intervene in the relationship between Shamshi-Adad and Jasmah-Adad, we have to deduce the previous history of the affair by reference to the context. Now that we have heard Jasmah-Adad express the uncertainties of the situation in which he found himself at Mari, it must surely be regarded as unfortunate for him that he entertained the idea of suggesting the incorporation of the town of Shubat-Shamash in the jurisdiction of Mari.

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[9] There also appear in his letters other exact indications of the time of despatch: 'in the morning', 'when half the day had passed', 'at the hottest time of the day'.

Was it precisely his realization of this—a bad conscience—that urged him first to ascertain his brother's opinion of the project?

Say to Jasmah-Adad: thus says Ishme-Dagan, your brother. With regard to the question of the extent to which you should expound to the king your wish for [taking over] Shubat-Shamash, the subject about which you have already written to me once you have caused a letter to come to me, and I have caused an answer to go to you. Now for the second time you have had a letter sent to me. I cannot fall in with your wish for Shubat-Shamash; it is not fitting. When the situation is such that the king, already on an earlier occasion, showed his anger against you in expressions such as this: 'Why have you till this very moment consistently neglected to put [the administration of] the cities of Mari and Tutul on a firm basis?'; then a wish for Shubat-Shamash is inappropriate precisely for this reason. If you demand Shubat-Shamash, the king will express himself in the following manner: 'So far he has not yet established a firm basis for Mari and Tutul, and nonetheless he now demands Shubat-Shamash', and he will enjoin you not to utter anything further (on the matter). As soon as you have consolidated Mari and Tutul, then you can demand Shubat-Shamash of the king, and he will then give it you with pleasure. This is brotherly advice that I give you here. I hope that you will not say: 'It is (then) not the wish of Ishme-Dagan that the district of Shubat-Shamash should be subject to the province of Mari.' Why forsooth should I be concerned with Shubat-Shamash? Shubat-Shamash is distant 20 double-hours' (march) from the city[10]; on the contrary it is situated near you, near the province of Mari. If parts of the area I have asked for (ought rather to) fall to you, then request them.

The relationship between the brothers can be elucidated by another letter from Ishme-Dagan to Jasmah-Adad, in which we encounter a similar slightly indulgent tone, and perhaps a hint of dissension and conflicts that after the death of Shamshi-Adad may well have contributed to a split in Assyria itself.

Among those close to me I have heard tell of a (certain) matter. You complain that Ajishtulla is to be installed (as governor) in the city Qattunin,

[10] It is uncertain whether by 'the city', Ishme-Dagan means Ekallatum or Assur; just as, in Latin, Rome is often simply called urbr, Assur is not infrequently thus described.

and your complaint has been reported to the king. Why do you complain of this matter, and how is it that you come to express yourself thus? That is not a dignified way of acting. What more can I write to you? If you come safe and sound to me, and we can meet, then it is well, (and) I will have a lengthy conversation with you [on the matter]. (Meanwhile) you live in distant parts, and there are not many with you who can advise you in these affairs; may the god then make you great! Important decisions, as many as may fall to your lot (to take) you shall write [....] in the fulness of your heart. What you have written to the king concerning Sin-dri, is not so. Formerly, in the city [. . . .], I expressed myself to you thus: 'Let me advise you! Without you am I [....]. The matter that you intend to (put before?) the king, [first write about it] to me ..... Do not write to the king. The region in which I live is near (the capital). That which you have in mind to write to the king, write it to me, so that I can advise you in the place to which you are going [....] ....

To a large extent the reconstruction of Assyrian history of this period depends on the correct interpretation of hints, intentions more or less ill-concealed, on an appreciation of the candour of the correspondents, and on what can, from time to time, be read between the lines. Moreover, the undercurrents in the language in which the texts are couched make them historical sources of the first rank, though at the same time sources that must be used with discretion and critical sense.

Shamshi-Adad's administration of the kingdom embraced all details of the life of society. The letters that now follow, as a selection of the rich store of material that is at our disposal, show clearly how few things can have escaped his vigilance.

He informs Jasmah-Adad in advance of the arrival of a caravan at Qatanum. He concerns himself with the manufacture of ploughs and the procuring of capable men to operate them—the maintenance of the fields and the cultivation of new areas must have been matters close to his heart. He is also aware of a matter that today constitutes Iraq's most serious problem—the lack of forests; naturally he had need of timber, but presumably also realized that the ground can only be effectively guarded against wind-erosion by new plantations. He gives orders regarding the despatch of timber to the cities. He makes his views known on a delivery of

bronze nails. He gives directions relating to the appointment of boat-builders, artists, officials, and contingents of troops, and interests himself personally in the plight of political prisoners. This selection consists entirely of letters from Shamshi-Adad to Jamsah-Adad.

(Caravans to Qatanum).

I have just now sent off a caravan to you—a caravan that brings an oracular response to Qatanum. This caravan you must not take possession of. The men [in the caravan] must be allowed to take an omen and [....]. Write to Terqa that they are to be given ten days' provisions, so that they can reach Qatanum.

Oracular responses from deities were obtained in Mesopotamia, among other methods, by examination of the entrails of the sacrificial animals, in particular by an investigation of the liver of a ritually-sacrificed sheep. An extensive literature in Babylonian, still extant, deals with anatomical manifestations deduced from the appearance of the liver of the sheep, with an explanation of the significance that even the smallest peculiarities were presumed to have for example: 'If a preponderance of the liver is seen to be loose, [it means that] the prince will be slain in his palace', or 'If [a certain] part of the liver is seen to be double [it means that] a son of the king will take over his father's throne.' Many instances are known of models of livers made of clay with explanations and comments written on the model. The conveyance of a sheep's liver from Shubat-Enlil to Qatanum is unthinkable without the use of a refrigerated wagon. We must therefore assume that a clay model of a liver that had provided an oracular response of particular interest to Qatanum was taken in the caravan mentioned in the letter. Omens could, besides, be drawn from all manner of phenomena in the world at large. Thus, a series of cuneiform tablets describes physiognomical omens—the more unusual external features of human beings, their idiosyncrasies and nervous reactions, a collection of remarkably interesting physiological observations—and explains the meaning of such characteristics. Other series set out omens that can be drawn from a consideration of unusual phenomena in the landscape or deduced from manifestations in the heavens (astrological omens). One particular group is formed of omens that experts took by interpreting the shapes assumed by drops of oil poured on water. Natal omens—the appearance of monsters,

such for example as a calf with two heads—had great influence in Mesopotamia just as they did later in Rome, where such events had to be reported to the Senate. Incidentally it is to be noted, not indeed without a certain feeling of dejection, that it was precisely this more dubious realm of Babylonian learning that particularly attracted attention in later times.

Thus a good deal of Babylonian divination lives on in European superstition. One Babylonian omen, for example, consisted of the following observation: 'If a pig is seen to enter a man's house with palm-fibres in his mouth, [it means that] the owner of the house . . . '. It is a long tradition indeed that handed on this omen to Dickens, who in The Old Curiosity Shop writes of Mr Swiveller: 'He also observed that while standing by the post at the street comer, he had observed a pig with a straw in his mouth issuing out of the tobacco-shop, from which appearance he augured that another fine week for the ducks was approaching, and that rain would certainly ensue.'

(Ploughs and Ploughmen).

I have constructed many ploughs in Shubat-Enlil, but there is no farmer that can use these ploughs. [Take] five farmers that live with you; take [....] from among [....] as replacements for them and use [these other men] as farmers. As (further) replacement for the farmers you send me, I will send you ten of my servants.'

Write to Tutul for a farmer to be sent to you, who is skilled in the plough and in ploughing-furrows. Send him to Ishkur-lu-ti.

(Forests, timber, etc.).

In the wood belonging to Mutu-Bisir [. . . .] issue strict orders that nobody is to approach the wood[11].

In that there [....], seek out (specimens of) the sarbatum tree to the extent of three GAR-measures with a view to [....]. Put the work in hand now, and [....], if it is a question of 20 or 30 sarbatum trees, they are to be

[11] This prohibition may well be directed against persons who wished to approach the wood with a view to felling trees in it. The situation is familiar in present-day Iraq, with its scarcity of trees, as one of the most difficult that the Government Forestry Office has to deal with in its work of reafforestation. Newly planted trees are regarded, and were regarded, by the Bedouin and by the city population as potential firewood.

felled for me. Embark them, and see that they come to Agbahum in good condition, so that Aqbahum can send them on to me in good condition from Qattunan.

The date-palms, cypresses and myrtle-trees that have been brought from the town of Qatanum lie (at present) in the town of Subrum. Send Mashija and a few officials with him to Subrum, where they shall divide the date-palms, cypresses and myrtle-trees into three lots. Send one-third of the date-palms, cypresses and myrtle-trees to Ekallatum, one-third to Ninuwa [i.e. Nineveh] (and) one-third to Shubat-Enlil. (Every) third part of this .... timber that is to be sent to Ekallatum, to Ninuwa and to Shubat-Enlil, they shall apportion. Write down on a tablet (every portion) by itself in accordance with the allocation you carry out, and send (one tablet) to me. That which you send to Shubat-Enlil is to be transported by ship to the town of Qattunan. Take (the timber) from Qattunan by wagons and bring it to Shubat-Enlil.

Another matter. A review shall be held; the troops shall be mustered and the fields measured out. Thus will a new apportionment of the fields be made with regard to the land. See to it that a sufficient number of experienced secretaries are available. Send Ursamanum to me at Shubat-Enlil, together with reliable scribes who can [....], so that they can work in conjunction (with us) on the mustering (of the troops) and the measuring of the fields.

(Manufacture of bronze nails).

Regarding the production of 10,000 nails (of the weight of) 6 seqel each, I wrote to La'um and Mashija; they have (thereupon) written to me as follows: 'There is no bronze available; we shall be unable to produce 10,000 nails.' Accordingly, (only) 5,000 nails are to be produced. For these 5,000 nails 8 talents (and) 20 minas of bronze are required. In common trading, 2 minas of bronze are worth 1 segel of silver; for 8 talents (and) 20 minas, 4 minas (and) 10 segel of silver are needed. Pay out this silver, so that the bronze [can be bought] and the 5,000 nails manufactured.

(Silver was the metal used at the time as the basis of money economy. At other periods of Mesopotamian history, conditions are known in which copper or lead served as standards of value. In trading, these metals were not

used in the form of coins, but cast in bars, slabs, or wires, also occasionally in rings of varying size. The standards of weight mentioned in the above letter are reckoned as follows: 1 talent [Akkadian biltum], about 66 lb. = 60 minas; 1 mina [Akkadian manum], about 1 lb. 2 oz. = 60 seqel; 1 segel [Akkadian shiglum], about 0.28 oz.)

(Concerning boat-builders).

With regard to the return to Tutul of carpenters from Tutul, who (at present) are at Shubat-Shamash—a matter on which you have written to me—I have just written to Ishkur-lu-ti (on the matter). He will allow these carpenters to go back to Tutul. Let them start on the work and build boats.

With regard to the boats, [....] have 60 boats built. As is known, I wished to send to you Silli-Ea, the boat builder. Write to Mari[12] to have Silli-Ea brought to you, and have 60 boats built at Tutul. There must be no negligence with regard to these boats.

(A singer is ordered to Shubat-Enlil).

Kulbi-atal, son of Hasri-Amum, the Nergal-singer from the town of Hubshalum; you are retaining him in Mari (and are causing him to perform) villeinage.

Set this man free now, so that he can perform his singing here in the service of the god Nergal.

(Transfer of officials).

The letter you sent me I have heard. You wrote to me on the matter concerning Shamash-ellasu and Jashub-El, who [....], (and) in accordance with your message I have sent Shamash-ellasu to Tutul. As to Jashub-El, you must send him to me. I myself am anxious to appoint him to a vacant post here. As to a replacement for Shamash-ellasu, you must appoint a reliable man who is in your eyes the most prominent in the land, (a man) who is honoured, and whom you have treated with favour at Terqa as a replacement for Shamash-ellasu.

(Movement of troop contingents).

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[12] Evidently when he received this letter Jasmah-Adad was temporarily not at Mari.

The letter you sent me I have heard. You have written to me not to have the garrison-troops at Tutul and Jablija sent home. [These troops have] for three years [. . . .] for the garrisons in Tutul, and you must establish [....] for Jablija [and ? ....] in the Lower Suha district. Do not say: 'The troops that have come home from Qatanum can settle here to (secure) the garrison. They can relieve one another. One detachment can remain here for one month, and then march off, and another detachment can replace them. In this way they can relieve one another without any cause for anxiety arising.' On the contrary, you are to have the garrisons in these towns manned by troops from your own district, and you are to release and send home to me troops of the land[13]. You must not keep them back. As to the muster you have written about, [....].

(Search for political prisoners).

The singer Sin-igisham, the barber Gurruru from Eshnunna, and Sillaja, these three men stayed in the town of Talhawum and had meetings with me. Now they have broken out (to make away), and thereupon have fled [....] together with their people. As soon as you hear this my letter, you are to have these men bound and to put them under strict guard; they are then to be brought to me at Shubat-Enlil.

Ushtan-sharri, son of Ullum-tishni, a man of the Turruku tribe, who was deported to Babylon, is now with Mishum in the town of Sagaratum. The palace has confiscated Mishum's house. Now investigate this man's behaviour and there, where he is staying, he shall be seized, and men-at-arms shall bring him to me at Shubat-Enlil. The Babylonian has requested him of me (to be handed over).

(These two letters are evidence of Shamshi-Adad's participation in the game of power-politics. Eshnunna [now Tell Asmar] was the capital of a kingdom in the valley of the river Diyala, northeast of Baghdad; Shamshi-Adad vied with the Amorite kings of Eshnunna for domination over the areas east of the Tigris, around modern Kirkuk and the territory south of that city. Eshnunna was independent, being ruled by its own kings until the 32nd year of Hammurabi's reign (c. 1696 B.C.), when in the course of the

[13] 'Troops of the land': the translation 'national troops' is also possible. Does this imply a confederate army?

violent expansion of Hammurabi's later years the Babylonian armies conquered Eshnunna, Subartu, and Gutium. In the second of the two letters quoted above, the expression 'the Babylonian' [Akkadian awilum babiljum, 'the man of Babylon'] refers to Hammurabi; this letter must therefore belong to the period between Hammurabi's accession in 1728 B.C. and 1716, the year of Shamshi-Adad's death. It seems probable that the letter should be dated to the period shortly before 1716, when, after several years' reign, Hammurabi had established Babylon's reputation, and could negotiate with Shamshi-Adad, not only on an equal footing but with the whole of the might of Babylon behind him. The names Ushtan-sharri and Ullum-tishni are both Hurrian).

This selection from the letters sent by Shamshi-Adad has shown how the king's personality permeated the administration of the Assyrian empire in civil and military matters. In his foreign policy he aimed at closer collaboration with other Amorite princes controlling territories along the upper reaches of the Euphrates and in the areas further to the west and south. Thus we have already seen a caravan sent from Shubat-Enlil to Qatanum, the modem Mishrifa, with an important communication obtained through divine intervention. Friendly relations existed between Shamshi-Adad and Ishhi-Adad, the king of Qatanum; on another occasion troops from Qatanum arrived at Mari, and they are described in such a manner that we must regard them as regiments belonging to what was virtually an international army, an imperial army ('troops of the land'), comprising detachments from Assyria as well as from Qatanum. A matter that was definitely of common interest for Assyria and Qatanum was the control of the nomadic tribes, the Bedouin, whose armed hordes never ceased to threaten the frontiers of the city-states.

The need of Qatanum for Assyrian support can be seen from the following letters.

Say to Jasmah-Adad: thus says Shamshi-Adad, your father. I have already written to you about the force of 500 men (from the troops) along the Euphrates, which it was suggested should be sent to Qatanum under the command of Zimri-ilu. Whether you have despatched them, or whether you have not despatched them, [I do not know], but as soon as you hear this my letter, you shall send off this force.

Meanwhile I have also written to you about the force of 400 men (from the troops) along the Euphrates, which it is suggested should be sent to Qatanum together with the troops from the land of Dumatum and together with Sin-tiri's troops. These 400 men, together with Dur [?]-Ningirsu, will come to you. Do not send these 400 men away before the troops from the land of Dumatum and the troops under [the command of] Sin-dri have arrived.... Let them join these 400 men and send them to Qatanum.

As to the southern [? literally: lower] part of the expeditionary force from the banks of the Euphrates, Mutu-Bisir and Samidahum are to take over command of (this force) [....]....

From the point of view of Qatanum, there is a letter that provides evidence both of the presence of Assyrian troops in that city and the necessity of further Assyrian reinforcements, whose arrival is awaited with expectancy, while their absence is regarded with a degree of desperation. In accordance with the diplomatic phraseology of the time, Ishhi-Adad, king of Qatanum, addresses his ally Jasmah-Adad as 'brother'. This is the normal form of address between princes of the same rank. From this it can be deduced that Ishhi-Adad recognized Shamshi-Adad as his liege lord; if we had letters from Ishhi-Adad to Shamshi-Adad, they would begin: 'Say to my lord, thus says your servant.' It is also clear from the letter that a daughter of Ishhi-Adad had been given in marriage to Jasmah-Adad, and that this sealed the alliance between Qatanum and Assyria.

Say to Jasmah-Adad: thus says Ishhi-Adad, your brother. For many days I have written for troops without cease. Your troops [here] answer me continually 'Yes, the troops will come'. But the arrival of the troops simply does not take place. Now I have once more sworn an oath by the life of the god, but wherever my eyes look, I have no confidence in the arrival of the troops. Now come (yourself) with the troops. Bring my daughter here with you. May the gods of her city be kindly disposed (towards her), and may I [have an opportunity to?] give her many gifts. May she be able to meet me, and may her head be loaded with honour!

The following letter may have been the origin of negotiations on the supply of Assyrian forces to Qatanum, or is it one of the letters in which Ishhi-Adad wrote 'for troops without cease'?

Say to Jasmah-Adad: thus says Ishhi-Adad, your brother. You have sent me word concerning Ishme-Dagan, and I rejoiced much over it. Another matter. Regarding your arrival here, do not be idle. The time is propitious for your arrival. Let your troops seize booty, and they will bless you. These three towns are not heavily fortified; we shall be able to take them in a single day. Come to me as quickly as possible and let us take these cities. Then your people will be able to secure booty. If you are my brother, come to me as soon as possible.

There is one letter from Ishhi-Adad that has no connexion with the rest. With no historical or political significance, it deals with the exchange of gifts between the two allied princely houses, and is unique among the letters from Mari. The fact that, although it is addressed to Ishme-Dagan, it was found in Jasmah-Adad's archives in that city, can only be explained on the assumption that Mari was the clearing-house for correspondence between Qatanum in the west and Ekallatum in the east; the courier service must have passed through Mari. The painful subject matter of this letter and the lack of restraint in its tone must have caused Jasmah-Adad to keep it from being sent on to Ishme-Dagan, whose feelings he would not wish to hurt. Incidentally, it may be noted that Jasmah-Adad was also interested in letters that were not intended for him.

Say to Ishme-Dagan: thus says Ishhi-Adad, your brother. This is a matter that should not be discussed. And yet, let me now discuss it, so that I can let my heart breathe freely[14]. You are a great king! You indicated to me your wish to procure two horses and I sent them to you. And now you have sent me 20 minas of tin! Have you not had your desire fulfilled by me without any discussion and in full measure?; and now you have sent me this scrap of tin! Had you sent me absolutely nothing, my heart would assuredly have been sick for the sake of the god my father. The price of these horses with us here in Qatanum is 600 (seqel) of silver, and you have sent me 20 minas of tin. What will the man say who hears this? Surely he will be unable to regard us as being on an equal footing. This house of mine is your house. What is the matter with your house that the one brother cannot grant the other brother his wish? Had you not sent me that tin, my heart would

[14] This is the literal rendering. 'Heart' in Akkadian can also mean 'temperament' and 'passion'.

certainly not have been sick on that account. You are no great king. Why have you done this? This house is your house. *bitum annum bitka*. 'This house is your house.' Ishhi-Adad's assertion is to be encountered in the Orient of the present day, where the Arab's beiti beitek, 'my house is your house', must of course often be interpreted with a grain of salt.

While these events—of greater or less significance—were going on at Mari and Ekallatum, Shamshi-Adad in his capital of Shubat-Enlil was occupied with matters that affected the very existence of his realm. It was continually necessary for his attention to be directed to the Bedouin. The nomads, with their pastures and perpetually shifting dwelling-places on the steppes in the Syrian desert and between the Euphrates and the Tigris, have left no written source-material themselves; these illiterate peoples did not acquire a literature until Islam united their successors under the banner of the Faith. The history of the ancient nomads can therefore only be recounted by making use of the written references to them left by the peoples of the higher cultures in Mesopotamia. The areas in the neighbourhood of Mari had been from the dawn of history one of the favourite invasion-routes used by the nomads on their way from the desert to the kingdoms of the city-dwellers. The Amorite rulers were themselves, of course, of desert stock, and belonged to dynasties that counted Bedouin sheikhs among their founders. The first kings of Assur had been rulers 'who lived in tents'. The Mari letters of the time of the Assyrian interregnum, and of the succeeding period when Zimrilim had come to power in his ancestral city, are among the most important sources for our knowledge of the nomads in the second millennium B.C.

Three tribes in particular are brought to life for us through the evidence of the Mari letters: the Hanu, Sutu, and Banu Jamina tribes. The Hanu tribe occupies the areas nearest to Mari, and from time to time places contingents of troops at the disposal of that city and of Terqa; they are allowed pasture-lands along the Euphrates. It is presumably by way of recompense for this privilege that the tribesmen put themselves under Assyrian command. Such co-operation seems, however, to have been of an uncertain character. On another occasion Ishme-Dagan, in a letter to Jasmah-Adad, mentions a raid perpetrated by members of the Hanix tribe against Shubat-Enlil: 'The Hanaeans changed their mind two days before I came to Shubat-Enlil, and stole the cattle and the goats belonging to the

palace. . . , as much as there was to steal.' From time to time mention is made in the letters of 'towns' belonging to the nomad tribes; individual towns are not mentioned, and no names are given; the 'towns' of the nomads were, then as now, their tented camps, anonymous dwelling-places, always on the move. Here the men folk of the tribe leave women and children behind when they go on their raids, and to their headquarters here they bring back their booty after a successful act of pillage. A letter from an official at Mari offers a suggestion that brings to mind more modern forms of terror:

The Hanaeans have come from their pastures and have now settled down in their towns. Once, twice, I have written to (them) in their towns. They have been summoned (to military service), but they have not assembled, and ere three days from now they will not assemble. If it is now in accordance with my lord's desire, one of the guilty men in prison could be slain, and his head be cut off and taken round the towns as far as Hutnum and Appin, so that the [Bedouin] troops may begin to take fright and therefore assemble as quickly as possible, so that I may be able as soon as possible to send off an expedition on the important mission with which my lord has charged me.

In the time of Shamshi-Adad and Jasmah-Adad, Hanaeans were frequently employed in the service of the palace. In the period after the Assyrian interregnum at Mari, Hanaeans at all times formed a considerable part of the standing army, but they are always mentioned separately from the rest of the army. 'May the king come to the banks of the Euphrates with the Hanaeans and all his troops'; they formed a legion on their own.

Even before the discovery of the Mari archives, the Sutu tribe was known from references in southern Mesopotamian texts as far back as the time of the Isin and Larsa dynasties. Thus the Sutaeans seem to have roamed over considerable areas, just as in our own time the Arabian Rualla tribe year by year passes in its hordes from northern Syria as far south as the deserts of Sa'udi Arabia. Jasmah-Adad informs his father that some 1000 Sutaeans are preparing a surprise attack on the town of Jablija on the Euphrates; he himself is given a report of an imminent raid by 2000 Sutaeans against Qatanum. In a letter from an official in the Mari administration to a district governor there occurs this emergency order: 'The Sutaeans are attacking.

Have the goats in your district scattered over the steppe.' There is quite clear evidence in the letters that the reports of the movements of the nomads and of the sinister purpose of the tribesmen were derived from spies, namely city dwellers who were sent among the Bedouin to carry out such a secret intelligence service.

The Banu Jamina tribe is established along the Euphrates and, further

7 (a). The western wall of the defences at Fort Shalmanesar, with ruins of three towers. In the background, the remains of the outer city wall of Nimrud, represented by a line of hillocks stretching to the north.

north, along the tributary Habur river, but the members of this tribe, too, range far and wide; groups of Benjaminites appear as far west as the region of Aleppo and Mishrifa (Qatanum). The name of the tribe means 'sons of the right [hand]', i.e. 'sons of the south'. As the tribe principally makes use of the pastures north of the Euphrates, this name cannot have been bestowed on it through its geographical relationship to Mari. The Benjaminites may very well have had their original home far to the south in the Arabian desert. The obvious question as to how far these Banu Jamina were progenitors of the tribe of Benjamin that at a later period immigrated into the Promised Land with other Jewish tribes cannot at present be

answered with any certainty; it is a possibility that future research may or may not be able to establish.

Jasmah-Adad was kept advised of the movements of the Bedouin by means of reports from one Taram-Shakim, who had his sources of information, or, if you will, his informers. Such a letter reads as follows:

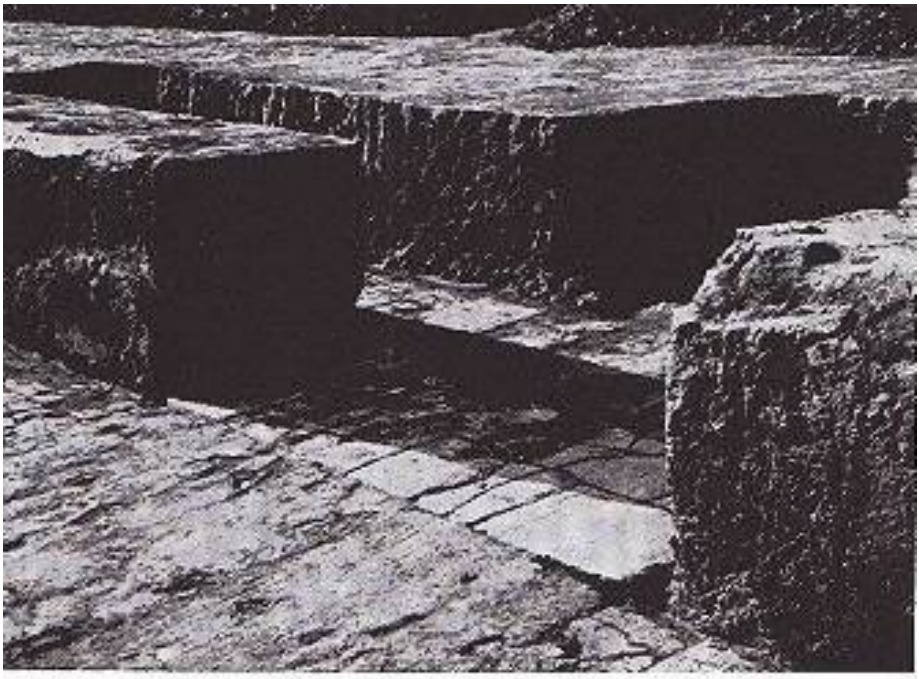
Say to my lord: Thus says Taram-Shakim, your servant. Inuh-Libbi has written to me as follows: '[The sheikh] Ishnulum has crossed [the river] at Mankisi in the direction of the desert.' What his intentions are I do not know. In this district all is well. May my lord not be disturbed.

Taram-Shakim is well-informed as to the intentions of tribes in areas as remote as that around Tadmor, later Palmyra:

Gazizanum, Abi-sare, Hami-urku [. . .] and 2000 Sutaeans assembled to form an army; thereupon they marched off to plunder in the pasture lands of the territory around Qatanum. But already before that, a group of 60 Sutaeans, (forming) another band, had gone off to plunder Tadmor and Nashala; they came back with empty hands, but they have killed a man among the Sutaeans who still remain at Tadmor. This report of the Sutaeans has reached me, and herewith I have sent it on to my lord.

It is incumbent upon Jasmah-Adad to keep Shamshi-Adad informed of the situation in the desert areas round Mari, of relations between the permanent population and the nomads, and of the discipline found among the tribesmen who made themselves available as mercenaries or in order to undergo a form of compulsory military service in return for the use of the pastures under urban control. From his father he receives orders and directives regarding his treatment of the tribes, instructions concerning reprisals, and so on. Thus we have a comprehensive letter from Shamshi-Adad to his son about measures to be taken regarding groups of Bane Jamina tribesmen. The word rendered in translation 'muster', tebibtum in Akkadian, means in its strictest sense 'purification'. By tebibtum is understood first and foremost a ritual cult-purification undergone by the soldiers before proceeding on a campaign; they are consecrated for battle. (This change of meaning corresponds exactly with that of the Latin word lustratio.) This act of purification thus became at the same time an institution forming part of military life, and in the Mari letters the main

emphasis is placed on this shade of meaning of the word tebibtum; although not strictly accurate, it is therefore necessary to render the word as 'muster'; the same applies to the corresponding verb.



7 (b). Gateway of the south-eastern courtyard at Fort Shalmanesar (width of doorway 13 feet).

8. Ivory figure from Fort Shlamanesar: winged sphinx in Egyptian style. Probably Phoenician work of 8th or 7th century B.C. (height of original, 7.9 inches)

Say to Jasmah-Adad: thus says Shamshi-Adad, your father. The letters that you have sent me I have heard. You wrote to me of the muster of the Benjaminites. The Benjaminites are not suitable for a muster. If you muster them, their brothers of the Rabba tribe who live on the other side of the

river in the land of Jamhad [i.e. Aleppo] will hear of it; they will take it amiss and will not return to their own land. Do not therefore entertain the idea of mustering them. Declare your decision to them in an unmistakable manner in the following words: 'The king is about to set out on an expedition. All, to the very least, shall be assembled. The sheikh whose men are not present in full strength, and who allows as much as one man to go free, will have sinned against the king.' Announce such a decision before them, (but) do not entertain the idea of mustering them.

Another matter. With regard to the partition of the fields along the Euphrates (and) the incorporation (of these fields) in the fields of the troops—concerning which I had written to you—you wrote to me as follows: 'The Hanaeans from the steppe, shall they or shall they not take over the fields along the Euphrates?' Thus it was that you wrote. Here I have questioned Ishar-Lim and (other) experts, and [it would appear that] the fields along the Euphrates are not suitable for portioning and measuring out. If you partition and measure out these fields, many complaints will come in. Do not contemplate partitioning the fields along the Euphrates. Allow each man in the usual way to keep his former property. The fields must not be turned topsy-turvyl. A field belonging to a deceased man or to a fugitive, you can measure out and give to a man who has no field. At the muster [of the standing army?], however, you can undertake a distribution [?] and a measuring-out and lead out the army. If only you [could?] undertake a scrupulous muster! As to the Hanaeans of the steppe, those who formerly had at their disposal the fields along the Euphrates, they shall continue to have the fields at their disposal.

You have also written to me about the building of a large number of boats, as well as the small boats, large boats whose . . . . measurement is 10 [....] are to be built to the number of thirty; and these boats, in the place to which they sail, shall likewise be at your disposal for the purpose of transporting your corn.

In a letter that begins by discussing another matter, Shamshi-Adad continues by recommending an ambush against a troop of Bedouin while they are busy watering their goats at a stream:

As to the raid that [....] have made in the land of [....], you have written to me that [....]. Now they have made a raid in the land itself, at Rapiqum.

They have become really menacing. Until they undertook the great raid they were not particularly powerful. [....] Make plans with Taram-Shakim and LA'fim, and submit the result to Bahdi [....], so that troops can be sent to you and can undertake raids in their district. And later on, at harvest-time, your allies will [....] them, and the pressure against them will be relaxed, and they will go down to the Euphrates, and when they water their goats at the brooks, a large-scale attack can be made (against them).

Mari was a desert fortress within the Assyrian realm. Jasmah-Adad's task consisted in maintaining communications towards the west; it fell to his lot to secure the caravan-routes connecting the Assyrian homeland with the provinces lying towards the Mediterranean. It was his duty to secure the frontiers in his district and to protect travelling traders against attacks from the Bedouin.

Since the affairs of Mari were in so many respects bound up with conditions in the desert, the Mari letters of the period of Jasmah-Adad's rule give us a first-class picture of Assyrian policy in the western regions. The eastern regions, governed from Ekallatum under the direction of Ishme-Dagan, come into the picture when the brothers exchange news of interest for them both. The letters sent to Mari by Ishme-Dagan show at once that at Ekallatum it was the peoples of the eastern mountains rather than the nomads on the steppes west of the Tigris that produced insecurity.

When the reader of the political correspondence of the period turns from Mari to Ekallatum, he realizes immediately that there is a change of climate. The cool air of the mountains, the snow on the peaks, the rushing flow of the torrents make their appearance in these letters. The towns are no longer made up of the low brown clay-built houses of the far-flung steppes, or the tented camps of the nomads; these are towns and villages that nestle in low valleys between mountain ranges, or cling desperately to a hillside, with stone-built houses that, in the words of a later Assyrian king, 'hang on the mountain-side like eyries'. The peoples are not now the Bedouin of the Arabian desert, whose way of life and Semitic dialects have always been common characteristics; these are mountain tribes with all the differences that thrive in an upland area, where every mountain range can be an effective barrier against the outside world. While deserts are traversed by caravans, and ships ply on seas and great rivers, mountains and forests

are capable of obstructing human intercourse and make a separate world of every valley. From these mountains, from the Zagros and its foothills, Gutians and Kassites came down into the Babylonian riverine, and from this area stemmed the expansion of the Hurrians towards Assyria. Such was the world that Ishme-Dagan faced.

Among the towns and cities mentioned in Ishme-Dagan's letters, it is only possible to identify a few with any accuracy. Even the location of Ekallitum is not known for certain. This was the city from which Shamshi-Adad had launched his attack on Assyria. Ekallatum was certainly situated near the Tigris, about 30 miles south of Assur; its ruins would have to be sought in a tell among the many to be seen on the left bank of the river, i.e. its eastern side, in this area. The city of Arrapha can be identified with a ruin-mound in modern Kirkuk or in the immediate environs of this city. Qabra has not been identified, but must have lain east of the Tigris and north of the Little Zab. As in this instance, it is most frequently only possible to give an approximate determination of the location of a town, a district, or a people; we can relate them one to another, and we can, with greater or lesser accuracy, state their relationship to known features such as the course of rivers or the position of towns that have already been identified. The technical expressions in the texts can often be of assistance. For instance, in Akkadian one verb is used for sailing up a river, and another for sailing down; therefore occasionally it is possible for us to state with certainty the relative position of two towns on the course of a river; if a journey from the first town to the second is achieved with the current, the second must necessarily be sought lower down the river than the first. If a load sent by ship is transferred to wagons to be conveyed to its ultimate destination, the latter is likely to lie at some distance from the harbour concerned; from evidence of this kind we noted above that Shubat-Enlil was not a port.

It is a corollary of the circumstances of archaeological discovery—and in this connexion I refer to the lack of archaeological discoveries—that our knowledge of Shamshi-Adad's attitude to Assyrian policy in the eastern provinces must at present remain one-sided, since we have to rely on the letters from Mari. His own letters to Ishme-Dagan in Ekallatum remain unknown, pending the discovery by an archaeological expedition of the ruins of that city and the unearthing of Ishme-Dagan's archives. Ishme-Dagan's reports to Shamshi-Adad have not been brought to light, despite

the many years of excavation at Assur; the whole of this material must be presumed to be awaiting its discoverer in the ruins of Shubat-Enlil. From the evidence of inscriptions, German Assyriologists have claimed to be able to adduce evidence for the identification of Shubat-Enlil with Tell Shaghir Bazar in the north-eastern corner of Syria. It would have been quite understandable if this proposition had mildly irritated the distinguished British archaeologist who excavated Shaghir Bazar in the years immediately before World War II—that he should have excavated Shubat-Enlil without realizing it—and the true identity of Shubat-Enlil still lies hidden.

Letters have been found in the Mari archives sent by Shamshi-Adad to Jasmah-Adad during campaigns in the areas east of the Tigris with armies that were under his own personal command. In letters from Shubat-Enlil to Mari he also occasionally reports on expeditions led by Ishme-Dagan; we have seen an instance of a letter of this sort in which the father uses the opportunity to hold out to Jasmah-Adad the example set by Ishme-Dagan in conquering the Turukku tribes. However, in an account of Assyrian foreign policy to the eastward that is based on the Mari archives, the personality of Shamshi-Adad must of necessity recede somewhat into the background. The most important sources are the letters from Ishme-Dagan to Jasmah-Adad concerning events in the area subject to Ekallitum. These are, of course, sources of first-class importance, but of limited scope; in this correspondence we can only expect mention of really important occurrences, if their consequences could be of interest as far away as Mari. In Ishme-Dagan's letters to his brother there is no mention of matters of internal eastern concern; the sources are silent with regard to persons, places, and events that could have no direct implications for Jasmah-Adad.

As is evident from the letter already discussed concerning Ishme-Dagan's exemplary military achievements, the Assyrian armies in the east were faced with two particularly outstanding opponents: the city of Qabri and the tribe of Turukkum. The co-operation between Shamshi-Adad ('the king') and Ishme-Dagan in their united efforts to subdue Qabra and other towns east of the Tigris may be illustrated in the following selection of letters. Some of them give us a vivid impression of Ishme-Dagan's indefatigability and hectic activity, his bellicose personality and his tireless efforts to exploit a victory before the enemy was able to rally and organize renewed opposition. Other letters give us an impression of the siege tactics

of the period and show how signals were sent by means of beacons over great distances; from the Zagros mountains to the Syrian desert, the flames leapt forth on elevated points as a signal for mobilization and readiness for emergency. Shamshi-Adad and Ishme-Dagan played the part of Caesars in the ancient Orient.

Say to Jasmah-Adad: Thus says Ishme-Dagan, your brother. A'innum and Zamijaturn situated on the [Little] Zab; these towns, that belong to the region of the city of Qabra, the king has taken. Rejoice! After taking these towns the king turned towards Qabra. This report has been brought to me. As soon as I hear further reports, I will send them to you.

Say to Jasmah-Adad: Thus says Ishme-Dagan, your brother. As soon as I had approached the town of Qirhadat, I caused siege-towers to be raised; in its wall I made holes, and in the course of eight days I had become master of Qirhadat. Rejoice! All the fortified towns in the area of Qabra have been taken, only Qabra [is left?]. It is well with me, (and) it is well with the troops. Do not let your heart be troubled.

Say to Jasmah-Adad: Thus says Shamshi-Adad your father. Having five days ago defeated the ruler of Qabra, (now) I have also defeated [the tribe] Ja'ilinum. I have also taken the town of Hibara. In this town I have made myself master of 300 of his [i.e. the ruler's] garrison troops and one of his sons. Rejoice!

Say to Jasmah-Adad: Thus says Ishme-Dagan your brother. I marched against Hatka. In the course of one single day, I brought this town low and made myself master of it. Rejoice!

Say to Jasmah-Adad: Thus says Ishme-Dagan, your brother. As soon as I had taken the towns of Tarram, Hatka, and Shunham, I turned against Hurara. This town I surrounded. I caused siege towers and battering-rams to be raised (against it), and in the course of seven days I had made myself master of it. Rejoice!

Say to Jasmah-Adad: Thus says Ishme-Dagan, your brother. It is well with me; it is (likewise) well with the troops that march with me. Let not your heart be troubled with (the thought of) my marches.... My heart however is troubled with (the thought of) your marches. The men who march with me are of outstanding quality. What [more] can I say? Let your

eye shine at (the thought of) my marches. Undertake that which is necessary for your own protection.

Say to Jasmah-Adad: Thus says Ishme-Dagan, your brother. You wrote to me that I should continually keep you informed of how far things go well with me. Till this moment I have not been able regularly to keep you informed of how I have fared. Now you are (I believe) to proceed from Kurda as far as Qattunan; [so] my well-being will arrive [in your person]. May it go with you in the same way!

Say to Jasmah-Adad: Thus says Shamshi-Adad your father. The town of Nilimmar that Ishme-Dagan besieged, Ishme-Dagan has [also] taken. As long as the siege-ramps did not reach the heights of the top of the town [i.e. of the town-wall], he could not make himself master of the town. As soon as the siege-ramps reached the top of the town, he gained mastery over this town. With Ishme-Dagan it is well. With the troops it is well. The troops have been sent home. They have come to the town of Hamsha. Rejoice!

Say to Jasmah-Adad: Thus says Ishme-Dagan, your brother. Since you have lit two beacons in the hours of the night, it is possible that the whole land will come to your assistance (though I hope not). Have letters written to the whole land—to the land of Andariq as far as to the districts around the towns of Hasidinum and Nurrugum—and let them be sent to me by your speediest messengers. The following shall be written [in the letters]: 'A heavily armed contingent of enemy troops has marched out for the purpose of plunder; it is for this reason that two beacons have been lit. It is by no means necessary for you to come and assist.'

In this connexion, it is beside the point that Jasmah-Adad has once more been unlucky; two beacons were the signal of a catastrophe; one beacon would have been sufficient on the occasion of a raid that he should have been able to counter by taking measures without external help, and his experienced brother had once more to save the situation for him.

We have come across Turukku, the Turukkaeans, tribes from the land of Turukkum, on earlier occasions. They were conquered by Ishme-pagan in battle. A Turukkaean was hunted by Shamshi-Adad on behalf of Hammurabi of Babylon, as a political prisoner. During the period after the death of Shamshi-Adad (1776 B.C.), a Babylonian victory over Turukkum

is reported in the 37th year of Hammurabi's reign (about 1755 B.C.). Turukkum therefore came within the spheres of interest of both Assyria and Babylon. It is moreover worthy of note that the Turukkaean sought by Shamshi-Adad and Hammurabi had a Hurrian name, Ushtan-sharri, and that his father's name, Ullum-tishni, was also Hurrian.

The following series of translations begins with a letter in which Jasmah-Adad asks Ishme-Dagan for information concerning the Turukkaeans. This is followed by four texts, chosen at random, in which Ishme-Dagan has complied with this request; these letters bear witness to bitter fighting between the Assyrians and the Turukkaean tribes. The selection concludes with a letter that can be dated relatively to the others; it is a report from one Jason-El to Zimrilim, when the latter had taken over power in Mari after the death of Shamshi-Adad. It belongs therefore to the period after 1716 B.C., while the other letters must be dated before that year.

Say to Ishme-Dagan: Thus says Jasmah-Adad, your brother. Previously the king wrote to me that the Turukkaeans had attacked, and that they were engaged in besieging Nithum. Since then neither the king nor yourself have written to me (to say) whether these men have been slain or whether they have all escaped. Now it has come to pass that Ashrija's heart is troubled. Therefore send me a full report concerning them together with the news of how it is with you.

And now there follow some of Ishme-pagan's answers:

As to the reports on the Turukkaeans, about which you have written to me, [I can reply that] the Turukkaeans are in the country round the town of Tiguninum. Formerly there was famine among them and they marched to the country round the town of Hirbazanum. The village of [....]-zuri had formed friendly connexions with them, but nevertheless they slew every single male inhabitant in that village. Its people and property they have carried away. This village became subjected to plundering. [....]. The Turukkaeans took five days' provision in this village. Since this village contracted friendly relations with them, after which they (nevertheless) took it, this region, whose ears were turned towards them [i.e. regarded them with sympathy] has hardened (its attitude) and has turned from them. Meanwhile the Turukkaeans have become famished; they have no provisions and they are (now) in the land around the town of Tiguninum

itself. After (sending) this letter I will write to you as to where they intend to march, and that they have marched away, as well as information as to their line of march. With me it is well, (and) with the troops it is well. Keep on writing to me as to how it is with you.

The enemy, Turukkum, have marched away and have come to [....]. They have gained mastery of Kakkulatum; after that they set on foot a plundering expedition against the interior of the country. They have taken cattle and booty. After this raid their number is not great, but it is in fact becoming greater. They will continue to come. I will make enquiries and send you a complete report.

Concerning the reports of the Turukkaeans, about which you have written to me, the reports about them have been mutually conflicting. Therefore until now I have been unable to write to you with any certainty. The impression concerning them, namely that they were thinking of a pact of friendship, has faded away. Jantakim, Lu-Ninsuanna and Water-Nanum and the most influential men wait, and they have written to me as follows: 'Since you will not give us hostages, tomorrow or the day after we shall march to that place (to which we intend) to march.' We must write to that place, and toy the place where they (wish to) march, they will march [....]. Let [....] be informed of this. Make your decision in the district in which you are dwelling.

You have written to me about the Turukkaeans. The day the Turukkaeans marched away, I was very busy and therefore could not send you information about the Turukkaeans. A detachment of the army pursued them, and I have slain many (of their) troops. Then it [i.e. the army detachment] meanwhile reached the banks of the river[15] and encamped there. The river was in flood and therefore [the men] could not cross. Meanwhile I caused troops to cross the river and sent them to the country round the town of Tigunanum. After the troops had crossed, the level of the water fell and the Turukkaeans crossed during the night. Thereupon the river rose [again] and I was not able to overtake them. Now the Turukkaeans have marched into the country round the town of Tiguninum, and have said [to themselves] 'he has marched [back] to his own land'. After the

[15] The word 'river' cannot refer to the Tigris. It undoubtedly means either the Little Zab or a smaller stream.

despatch of this my letter, I will send you a complete report on the Turukkaeans.

The Mari archives do not permit us to follow the further development of relations between the Assyrians and the Turukka tribes in the period immediately following that of these letters. Jasim-El's letter, of the period after 1716 B.C., suggests, however, that hostilities were at last brought to an end, and that a treaty was possibly concluded, an agreement that, as so often happened, was sealed by a marriage between the families of the parties concerned; a daughter of Zazija, the Turukkaean prince, was betrothed to Mat-askur, a son of Ishme-Dagan.

Say to my lord [Zimrilim]: thus says Jasim-El, your servant. From my [private] sources (of information) I have heard of a matter that goes as follows: 'Ishme-Dagan has made peace with the Turukkaeans; he will take the daughter of Zazija as a bride for his son Mat-askur. Ishme-Dagan has caused gold and silver to be brought as a marriage-portion for Zazija, and men from Eshnunna have been placed at the disposal of Ishme-Dagan as auxiliaries.' Perhaps my lord [Zimrilim] will hear tell of this affair. Such is the information that I have learned from my [private] sources, and about which I have written to my lord.

It will be observed that the information of the proposed marriage between the Turukkaean princess and the Assyrian prince comes to us in the form of a confidential report from Mari, a rumour of which Zimrilim can scarcely have been unaware. At present we do not know whether anything came of this marriage, but we can well understand it if, after his father's death and the loss of Mari, Ishme-Dagan realized that it was to his advantage to secure himself against surprise attacks from the east and south-east by making an alliance with Turukkum and the kingdom of Eshnunna. Could there have been plans for a combined attack on Zimrilim in Mari? Could it have been intended to form a coalition against Babylon, whose power was steadily increasing under the leadership of Hammurabi? Even had Ishme-Dagan co-operated in the elaboration of such plans, the succeeding period was to show that such schemes were fruitless.

There is a particularly interesting letter dating from the period when the Turukkaeans were perpetually challenging the right of the Assyrians to control the areas east of the Tigris.

Say to Jasmah-Adad: Thus says Ishme-Dagan, your brother. With regard to the land of Shusharra, about which you have written to me that this land is in turmoil, and that we shall not be able to retain our hold on it, Ishar-Lien must inform you. Lidaja, the Turukkaean commander and the Turukkaeans with him, who are now in this land, have shown themselves hostile and have destroyed two towns. I came to the rescue, and they withdrew into the hills. We made enquiries, and since this land cannot be brought (back) under control, I have [....] this land; and so [the land around] the city of Arrapha and [the land] around Qabra shall be [....] inhabited [?]. The troops from the interior of the country will be sent home. It is well with me. Let not your heart be troubled.

At present it is not clear where this letter should be placed in relation to the other letters from Ishme-Dagan that deal with relations with the Turukkaeans. But its tone is clearly different. 'Rejoice!' is replaced by 'Let not your heart be troubled'. The land of Shusharra is abandoned, and the troops withdrawn. The overtones of this report from the front are undeniably reminiscent of the communiques in which not so many years ago we were accustomed to hear such manoeuvres described as 'a shortening of the front-line' and 'elastic tactics'. What did Ishme-Dagan learn from his intelligence service? That the Turukkaeans, as he says in another letter, 'will still continue to come'? That their numbers would again increase? Did he abandon the land of Shusharri because his lines of communication to it were too long and too insecure? Had experience taught him that the tribes could disappear without trace behind the nearest hills, to appear later unannounced, in a surprise attack when they were least expected? Did he learn the same lesson about this country and its tribes as British troops learnt much later, when Iraq became a British mandate after World War I and the Kurds of Iraq had to be pacified? Was the Turukkaean Lidaja as formidable an opponent as Sheikh Mahmixd, the champion of Kurdish freedom in the nineteen-twenties?

If Ishme-Dagan's report on the land of Shusharra is read attentively, it will be noted that, according to the wording of the letter, it was Jasmah-Adad who in a previous communication had informed his brother that Shusharra was in turmoil, and had expressed doubt whether the Assyrian troops could retain their hold on the land. What accounted for this interest of Jasmah-Adad in the problems of the eastern part of the kingdom?

This question can probably best be answered by comparing this letter with a certain group of the Mari letters that must, from internal evidence, belong to the last phase of the Assyrian interregnum. In this series of letters the style of Ishme-Dagan becomes more and more authoritative. Two of the letters still mention 'the king', i.e. Shamshi-Adad; but the orders are issued by Ishme-Dagan. Various other circumstances indicate that in his latter years Shamshi-Adad made over more and more power to the son that resembled him most, namely Ishme-Dagan, whom he had so often held up as an example to Jasmah-Adad. We cannot ascertain how old Shamshi-Adad was at the time of his death in 1716 B.C. He had occupied the throne of Assyria for 33 years. Previously he had spent three years at Ekallatum and presumably also a number of years in Babylon; in his boyhood or as a young man, he had stayed at his father's court at Terqa. As we have seen, he had lived an active life. If his age were still only somewhere around the sixties, this would even in modern Iraq be a remarkably advanced age. It is certain that in his father's old age Ishme-Dagan saw it as his duty to relieve him of burdens. Perhaps, then, the letter about Shusharra can be regarded as evidence that some of the eastern provinces were about to be handed over to the jurisdiction of Jasmah-Adad. Did Ishme-Dagan foresee that he would himself soon have to transfer his activities to Assur or Shubat-Enlil? Did he realize that Mari could not be held for long? Was Jasmah-Adad to succeed him as viceroy at Ekallatum when he himself was obliged to leave that city because of his father's old age, sickness, or death?

The following is a selection of letters from Ishme-Dagan to Jasmah-Adad that belong to this last phase of Assyrian rule in Mari.

Mules and lagu-asses of first quality are on the way from the lands of Andariq and Harbe. If you make enquiries you will be informed of this matter. On several occasions previously, the king obtained asses from Anna-Adad in Andariq: earlier still, Jahdunlim also obtained asses in the same place on several occasions. In the lands of Andariq and Harbe there are asses and dogs; and the she-asses [?] that I have available from the upper land north of the Euphrates are of small build. See to it now that ten first-class Gutian she-asses [?] are procured, and have them brought to me.

Herewith I send you the king's letter written with reference to (the matter of) the doors. Write to me with information as to the date of the sailing of the boats, and the exact time of their arrival at Mari.

Among your servants you are to seek out [?] one; let him have supervision of the doors.

As to the scribe Nanna-palil, about whom you wrote to me, I do not know this man. Send me one of your servants that knows him and let him inform me about him.

As to the Hanaeans that have been sent home [or released?] of whom you wrote to me, I have had the letter you sent me read out before Qarradum, who has made the following statement: 'I wish to make a statement before the sheikhs. But let my lord [i.e. Ishme-Dagan] also write to Jasmah-Adad and let him bring the letter concerning the matter.' That was what Qarradum said to me. Now have this letter written and send it to him.

In the month Tammuz[16] on the eighth day in the evening, on that day and no other, I will set out on my journey to you. Take measures accordingly.

The tone of these letters is such that we seem almost to hear Shamshi-Adad himself talking; this is the great king's curt, clipped style, dictated by an impatient and busy ruler to a secretary, who seldom had time to polish up the sentence structure, correct his own (or his master's) mistakes, or produce a calligraphic masterpiece. Some of these and similar letters from Ishme-Dagan can unquestionably be attributed to the short period between the death of Shamshi-Adad and the fall of Mari. Inevitably, we find among the Mari letters the following addressed to Jasmah-Adad:

Say to Jasmah-Adad: Thus says Ishme-Dagan, your brother. I have ascended the throne in my father's house. This is why I have been extremely busy, and have not been able to send you news of my well-being. Now, you are my brother; I have no other brother but you. The town of Uta, that you will take over; I will accept its peace [i.e. I will make peace with it]. You must not be anxious. Your throne is and will remain your throne. The gods

[16] The month Tammuz corresponds to the last part of June and the first part of July.

Adad and Shamash I hold in my hand. The peoples from Elam and the man [i.e. the king] of Eshnunna I lead by my reins. You must not be anxious. As long as I and you are alive, you shall sit on your throne. Let us swear a binding oath to each other by the life of the gods, and thereupon let us meet, I and you. Let us maintain brotherly relationships with each other for all time. Rejoice! Let your heart have no care. Elam's sukkal [ruler], my lord [. . . .] . . . . [. . . .] Send me your complete report.

So power has passed from the founder of the dynasty to the most important of his sons. There is no letter to indicate whether this event occurred after death of Shamshi-Adad, or whether he abdicated in favour of Ishme-Dagan. Nor do we know whether the death of Shamshi-Adad was due to natural causes or was brought about by the crown prince; such a practice has not been altogether unusual in princely houses of the Orient. I prefer to believe that Ishme-Dagan was loyal to his father to the last.

As regards Assyria's foreign relations at the time of Ishme-Dagan's accession, there was an alliance with Eshnunna, the Amorite kingdom in the valley of the river Diyala. Ishme-Dagan 'led the king of Eshnunna by his reins', and we have heard Jasim-El report to Zimrilim that auxiliary troops from Eshnunna were available to Assyria. It is more difficult to judge relations with Elam; the expression 'Elam's sukkal, my lord [....]' is at variance with the earlier statement that Ishme-Dagan also led the people of Elam 'by his reins'. At this point the text is broken, so that we must await new finds, before being able to judge relations between Assyria and Elam at the time of the accession.

The town of Uta which, according to the last letter, Jasmah-Adad was about to take over, is only mentioned in one other place in the Mari archives; in a letter from Shamshi-Adad to Jasmah-Adad, consisting of a report on Ishme-Dagan's military operations in the east, in which the following appears among other statements:

The enemy who, under the command of Lidaja, stands opposed to Ishme-Dagan, has heard the call to arms among the troops drawn up round Ishme-Dagan, and has left his town; he has marched off and has gone away. The land [round the town of] Uta he has subdued and provided with a single administration [literally, caused it to exist in accordance with one mouth]. The troops have been discharged in the midst of the land; two or

three days they will rest in their houses. Thereupon they will reassemble; I will [myself] lead the troops in their full array and in the middle of this month together with the army will reach my destination in that area.

The town of Uta and the territory surrounding it must accordingly have been in one of the provinces east of the Tigris. Lidaja was the Turukkaean commander among whose theatres of operations was the land of Shusharra and whose haunts lay in the hills around. Jasmah-Adad's anxious forebodings regarding Shusharra, taken in conjunction with the fact that at his brother's accession he was to take over the administration of Uta, indicate that his jurisdiction was being extended eastwards. Was an organized withdrawal from Mari occurring simultaneously?

By what names do these easterly places go today? What did the land of Uta comprise? Which of the countless hills in the eastern Tigris valley, which tell, contains the ruins of Qabra? Where was the ancient Shusharra?

The alliance of Eshnunna with Assyria was not of long standing. Five years before the death of Shamshi-Adad, the two kingdoms both laid claim to Qabri, which at the time was conquered by Eshnunna. The death of the Assyrian king was, however, an event of such importance that in Eshnunna the year 1716 B.C. was known thereafter as 'the year in which Shamshi-Adad died'. Shortly after Shamshi-Adad's death, Zimrilim, the pretender of the dynasty of Jaggidlim, the son of Jahdunlim, had driven Jasmah-Adad out of Mari and made himself master of that city, which he regarded as his rightful inheritance. With the loss of Mari the original material from this source for the elucidation of Assyrian history comes to an end; but a comprehensive political and administrative correspondence has been preserved from the reign of Zimrilim (about 1716-1695 B.D.), just as it has been from the Assyrian interregnum.

According to the Assyrian king-list, Ishme-Dagan ruled for forty years (1716-1677 B.C.). But detailed information as to the events of his reign will not be available until the discovery of his own correspondence. It is possible that he was for some time obliged to recognize the suzerainty of Babylon; in the prologue to his code of laws, which includes a catalogue of the subject cities in which the cult of the local gods is safeguarded, Hammurabi names both Assur and Nineveh.

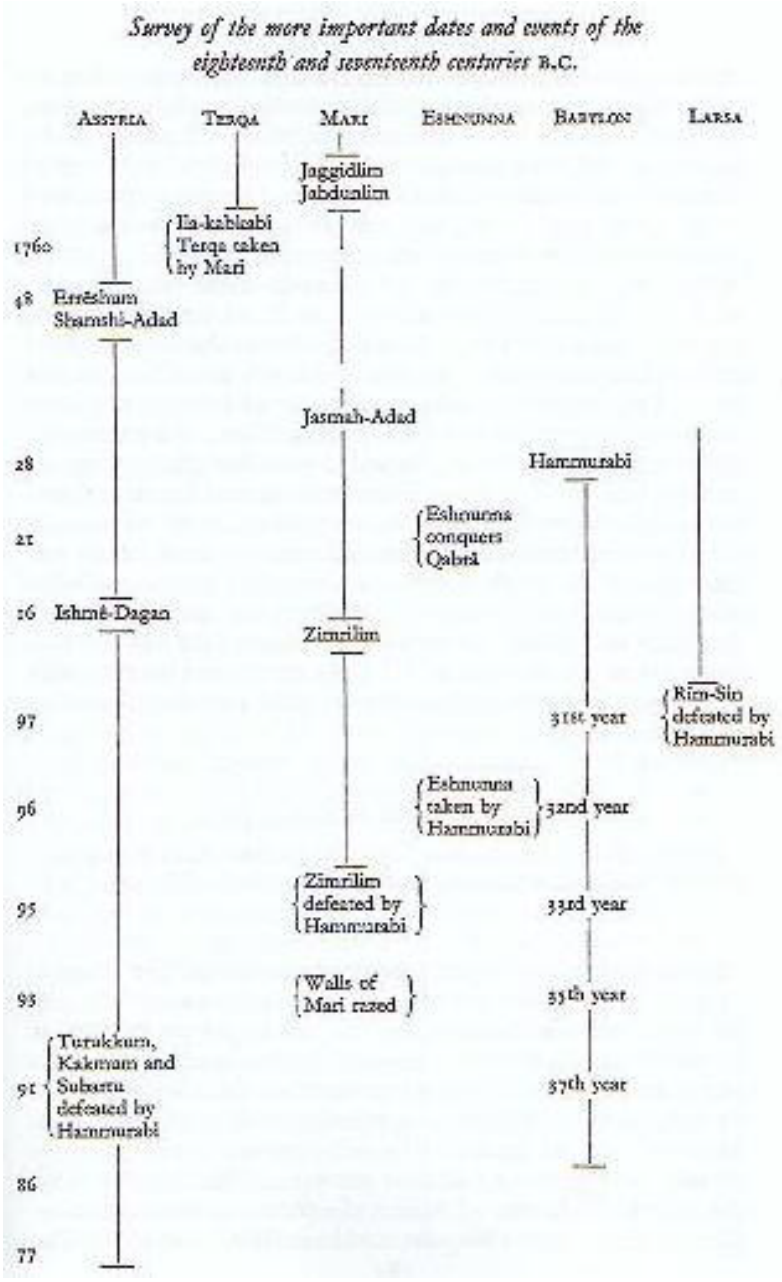
A letter from Zimrilim's archives at Mari illustrates foreign relations in Mesopotamia during the period immediately following 1716 B.C.; it is a real jigsaw, with coalition facing coalition.

There is no king who, by himself, is strongest. Ten or fifteen kings follow Hammurabi of Babylon, the same number follow Rim-Sin of Larsa, the same number follow Ibal-pi-El of Eshnunna, the same number follow Amut-pi-El of Qatanum, twenty kings follow Jarimlim of Jamhad [Aleppo].

In this world, where so many interests clashed and so many conflicts arose, Zimrilim survived for a long time by the exercise of astute diplomatic methods. His envoys were established in all the princely courts from the cities of Syria to the metropolitan centres of Babylonia. His intelligence service, comprising fast couriers, a system of beacon-signals over the steppes, and the receipt of written reports at regular intervals, had phenomenal success. Those princes at whose courts he had diplomatic representatives could undertake little that did not immediately come to the ears of Zimrilim. From time to time there are literal quotations of what a ruler has stated formally, or happened to remark to Zimrilim's emissary; sometimes the latter hears of one matter or another 'through private connexions'. The envoy in Babylon 'hears everything that Hammurabi has to say. Hammurabi has no secrets from him. In the audience hall of Mari, excavated by French archaeologists, were to be found envoys from all the courts of Babylonia and Syria as well as from the Bedouin desert-tribes. Thus for a period of twenty years Zimrilim was able to maintain his independence at a time when armies of up to 40,000 men were determining the fate of the kingdoms of Mesopotamia. His rule marks a time of vigorous life at Mari; building-construction, agriculture, the canal systems, trade and crafts were all flourishing.

Meanwhile, in the struggle for absolute mastery, Hammurabi of Babylon was in the process of eliminating his rivals and opponents one by one. In his 31st year (1697 B. C.), by the defeat of Rim-Sin of Larsa, he had rid himself of his most dangerous rival in southern Mesopotamia and could now turn his attention to the north, along the Tigris, and the north-west, along the Euphrates. In his 32nd year he subdued Eshnunna, Subartu, and Gutium; in the year after (1695 B.C.) he put an end to the independence of Zimrilim at Mari, but he spared the city and named Zimrilim as his

vassal. A revolt against the Babylonian occupation troops must have necessitated a renewed attack, for two years later, in Hammurabi's 35th year



the walls of the city were razed. After this, our sources are silent as to the history of Mari.

The further consolidation of the power of Babylon to the north must, as we have seen, have involved Assur and Nineveh, even though the capture of these cities is not specifically mentioned in Hammurabi's year-formulas. The rebellious Turukkaean tribes in the mountains east of Assyria had also come up against Babylonian arms. The 37th year of the reign was 'the year in which with the support of the god Marduk he conquered the armies from Turukkum, Kakmum, and the land of Subartu'. How effective was the Babylonian subjugation of Turukkum and Kakmum and whether it was followed by a more continuous Babylonian influence in the Kurdish mountains, are questions that cannot be decided from Babylonian source-material.

The Turukkaeans who have so far been mentioned by name in this account have had Hurrian names. It was Ushtan-sharri, son of Ullum-tishni, who was deported to Babylon and later sought by Shamshi-Adad and Hammurabi. It was Lidaja, the Turukkaean commander, who attacked the land of Shusharri, and who on another occasion surrendered the town of Uta to Ishme-Dagan without a fight under pressure of the din of arms in the Assyrian camp; and it was Zazija whose daughter's marriage to the son of Ishme-Dagan was to seal a pact of friendship between the Assyrians and the Turukkaeans. There are, therefore, grounds for believing that Hurrians had considerable influence among the Turukkaeans. In the period following the reign of Ishme-Dagan at Assur, the Hurrians were destined to play a decisive part in the history and cultural development of Assyria.

With Shamshi-Adad and his sons, the Amorites had made their entry into Assyria. About 1700 B.C., then, Amorite kingdoms had arisen from north to south all over Mesopotamia, and also to the west along the Euphrates, well into Syria, Amorite princes held sway in numerous kingdoms, large and small. The Amorite inheritance, their desert past, crops up here and there in the inscriptions and letters of Shamshi-Adad and in the correspondence of his sons. Although the form of the language is classical Babylonian, Amorite dialect forms and peculiarities turn up here and there in the choice of words in letters hastily dictated. In his earliest inscriptions at Assur, Shamshi-Adad uses the Amorite form of his name, Samsi-Adad,

'the god Adad is my sun', whereas the correct Babylonian form is Shamshi-Adad. In some respects the Amorite dialect displays nearer kinship with South-Semitic (Arabic), while Akkadian is further removed from this more southern Semitic language-group. Thus an Arabic -s- regularly corresponds to Akkadian -sh-; in this respect Amorite follows the South-Semitic practice. A remarkable situation is encountered regarding the names of the king's sons. Ishme-Dagan, 'the god Dagan has heard (me)' bears a name that is formed in accordance with the phonetic system of the Akkadian language; on the other hand, the name Jasmah-Adad, 'the god Adad has heard (me)', is Amorite. The verbs ishme and jasmah (h reproduces a guttural sound corresponding to the Arabic 'yin, for which cuneiform had no special sign; thus more exactly jasma') are identical in meaning, but each appears in its own dialectal form. Akkadian had at an early date lost the guttural sounds (laryngeals) that are a mark of the sound systems of most other Semitic languages, but the loss of the guttural sounds was accompanied by a shift of the vowel a to e; and the Semitic verbal prefix ja- suffered mutation in Akkadian to i-. -sh- in Ishme-Dagan's name corresponds to -s- in Jasmah-Adad's, just as -sh- in Shamshi-Adad corresponds to -s- in the form Samsi-Adad. Similarly, ain Assur and Eka-Mtum the names of rulers were given according to the Akkadian (Babylonian) custom of conferring names; in Mari, the viceroy used the Amorite form of his name. For this there could have been political reasons. For Jasmah-Adad it must for obvious reasons have been politic to demonstrate as much as possible his solidarity with the local population. In Ekallatum and Assur the assimilation of the names of the regents to Babylonian usage was part of a deliberate attempt to introduce Babylonian civilization into Assyria; the adaptation of these names is, of course, only one piece of evidence of a policy that Shamshi-Adad carried out to the fullest possible extent. As a foreign conqueror, he had overthrown the native dynasty of Assur; his inscriptions are framed in Babylonian style and in the spirit conceived by the great kings of the dynasty of Akkad six hundred years earlier. Shamshi-Adad saw himself as the heir of the kings of Akkad and as protagonist of Babylonian culture in the northern province of Mesopotamia. When, about 1300 B.C., Assyrian kings once more began to have inscriptions prepared in large quantities, they based their style on that introduced into the land by Shamshi-Adad, and they used the form of language that he had chosen. His significance in the course of history was

that through his inspiration Assyria was till a late period indissolubly linked with Babylonian culture and with the latter's Sumerian background. Moreover, he fashioned the first Assyrian empire-state, one that was to live in the memory of later Assyrian rulers; his genius for organization provided a model for coming generations.

(B) Hurrian Interlude

Hurrian Infiltration Increases-Nuzi-Mittanni-Indo-European Aristocracy-The Hittites-Assyrian Struggle for Liberation.

The reign of Ishme-Dagan is poorly documented. The Assyrian king-list gives as his successor a certain Ashur-dugul 'who was the son of nobody in particular', the usual Assyrian description for an obscure usurper. He is said to have reigned for six years and to have been followed by no fewer than six rulers, who were likewise 'sons of nobody in particular', and who reigned for only one year altogether. The situation in Assyria after the dynasty of Shamshi-Adad thus much resembled that marking the end of the dynasty of Akkad, the period of which the compiler of the Sumerian king-list could ask: 'Who was king? Who was not king?'. The Assyrian king-list goes on to name the rulers of Assur, one after the other, up to and including Shalmaneser V (726-722 B.C.); but for a period of nearly 300 years after Ishme-Dagan's reign, these kings possess no individuality; only sporadic inscriptions from Assur report restorations of temples and walls in the city.

This hiatus in Assyrian history coincides with an organized Hurrian expansion, the course of which can be better judged by its effects than in its separate phases.

Hurrian colonies were to be found in Mesopotamia as early as the time of the dynasty of Akkad, when a group of Hurrians are known to have settled in the city of Nippur. The Hurrians, however, did not begin to appear in Mesopotamia in large numbers until about the time of the Third Dynasty of Ur, and northern Mesopotamia was the principal goal of their immigration. A bronze tablet now in the Louvre, which is stated to have come from Samarra, contains an inscription that can be attributed to a Hurrian ruler named Arishen. He represents himself as king of Urkish and Nawar, areas in the north, to the east of the Tigris, and reports that he had built a temple for the god Nergal [in Samarra, if the information regarding the provenance of the tablet is correct]. From internal evidence the text can be dated to the period between the dynasty of Akkad and the Third Dynasty of Ur, and is therefore in all probability evidence of a small Hurrian

kingdom, of strictly limited duration, in northern Mesopotamia, with a certain amount of influence as far south as Samarra on the Tigris, about 60 miles north of Baghdad. But this is an isolated phenomenon. The Hurrian infiltration, stemming from the mountain regions north-east of Iraq, was during these centuries peaceful for the most part, and merely resulted in the establishment of enclaves of Hurrians scattered among the already existing urban centres.

From the beginning of the second millennium, Hurrian influence became steadily stronger. In the Old-Assyrian business texts from Kanesh in Anatolia. Hurrian personal names appear side by side with Assyrian names and names in the native tongue. The texts from Shaghir Bazar bear witness to the presence of Hurrians in this community about 1700 B.C. In the excavations at Mari a small number of ritual texts were found written in Hurrian with no Akkadian translation. The Nergal-singer Kulbi-atal, whom Shamshi-Adad requested Jasmah-Adad to send to him at Shubat-Enlil, had a Hurrian name [His father's name, Hasri-Amum, is certainly Amorite!], and in the community at Mari there were several other persons with Hurrian names. The texts from Alalah [now Tell Atshana] in northern Syria that can be attributed to the time of Hammurabi give evidence of a population in which it can be assumed statistically from a wealth of personal names that half of the people were Hurrian. In southern Mesopotamia, on the other hand, there were only a few resident Hurrians; we know of one single colony in the town of Dilbat, 15 miles south of Babylon, at the time of Hammurabi, but like the other Hurrian colony at Nippur, this is an isolated group. This Hurrian infiltration was of a peaceful character; the newcomers made no disturbing impact on the life and customs of the earlier inhabitants.

In the north-eastern regions of Mesopotamia, Hurrian tribes at the time of Shamshi-Adad and Zimrilim showed a less peaceable disposition. During the conflict between Assyrian armies and the Turukkaeans Shamshi-Adad and Ishme-Dagan were confronted by Hurrian opponents, whom they never succeeded in quelling effectively; eventually, they chose to conclude an alliance with the Turukkaean tribes. Towards the close of his reign, Zimrilim of Mari had trouble with Hurrian bands along the eastern frontiers of his realm. Historical sources from areas outside Mesopotamia show that at a later period a Hurrian invasion passed through north

Mesopotamia in a westerly and south-westerly direction; about the middle of the second millennium, the Hurrians became numerous in Qatanum [Mishrifa] and in Ugarit [Ras Shamra] on the coast of the Mediterranean; the Amarna letters bear witness, with the occasional appearance of Hurrian names, to Hurrian influence in Palestine. A similar indication is given by Hurrian names possessed by princes of Jerusalem, e.g. Abdi-hepa, in the Amarna period (about 1380-1350 B.C.). The armed Hurrian expansion after 1680 B.C., following the peaceful immigration of the preceding centuries, must be presumed to have had causes arising on the Iranian plateau in the lands beyond the Zagros mountains; it could have been a consequence of the migrations that brought Indo-European tribes, Indo-Iranians, into southern Turkestan and forced the Hurrians westward. The very silence of Assyrian sources is evidence that Assyria, situated as it was far to the east of the Near Orient, was particularly destined to bear the burden of the fateful consequences of the Hurrian migrations.

The best evidence for the presence of Hurrians in an Assyrian milieu comes from the excavations of the city of Nuzi [now Yorghan Tepe], a short distance south-west of Kirkuk, in the ancient Arrapha. Thousands of business documents that can be dated to the fifteenth century B.C., show that the population here at this period was quite overwhelmingly Hurrian. The business documents of Nuzi are written in Akkadian, but an Akkadian of such unusual character, and with so many Hurrian expressions incorporated in the language, that it is clearly evident from the orthography, phraseology, and syntax that the spoken language at Nuzi was Hurrian. From Assur itself come several hundred texts which show that, around 1400 B.C., the city was populated by Assyrians and Hurrians, the latter certainly somewhat less numerous than the former, but of sufficient importance for persons with Hurrian names frequently to occupy high positions in the administration of the city; thus, on several occasions, Hurrians occupied the office of limmu (see footnote 4), after which the year in question was named according to the Assyrian calendar-system.

Politically, the city of Nuzi admitted dependence on a central Hurrian state-authority established some time prior to 1500 B. C. in the area along the Habur, the northern tributary of the Euphrates. The capital of this Hurrian kingdom was Washukkanni, a city that it has recently with some likelihood been proposed to identify with the present Tell Feheriya; the

excavation that could confirm this assumption has not yet, however, been undertaken. The time when a series of lesser Hurrian communities were united through the establishment of a greater state cannot be exactly determined, and this Hurrian state, called Mittanni, which lasted till about 1350 B.C., was of varying extent and influence. In the fifteenth and fourteenth centuries, when Mittanni reached the peak of its power, its kings enjoyed an equal footing with the Pharaohs of Egypt and with the Kassite kings of Babylon; after a period marked by clashes of interest in Syria, friendly relations were inaugurated between the ruling houses of Mittanni and Egypt, and a lively correspondence ensued. Thus, among the finds at Tell el-Amarna, were letters from the king of Mittanni, Tushratta, to Amenhotep III and Amenhotep IV (Akhenaton).

It is a peculiarity of the kingdom of Mittanni that the initiative in establishing this state seems to have come not from the Hurrians themselves, but from a class—certainly small in numbers—of Indo-European aristocracy, who must have assumed political leadership among groups of the population that otherwise were predominantly Hurrian. The basis of this assumption of political leadership was the fact that the Indo-Europeans could rely on the support of regiments equipped with horse drawn chariots of war. The horse, though rare, was not quite unknown in the Near East at the time; in Ishhi-Adad's sarcastic letter to Ishme-Dagan, we have seen how two horses were sent as a gift from Qatanum to Ekallitum, a gift that was requited with 22 lb. of tin, and there is other evidence for horses in the time of Hammurabi. The combination of horse and chariot, however, was a new and revolutionary method of conducting war; and it must have been the possession of the horse and war chariot that made the Indo-Europeans into leaders of the Hurrians on their road to power over large parts of Mesopotamia and the surrounding areas. Rulers with Indo-European names appear sporadically also in other regions of the Near East at this time; one of the Kassite kings of Babylon has an Indo-European name, and in the Amarna period Indo-Europeans are found here and there as rulers in the small kingdoms in Asia Minor, Syria, and Palestine.

By linguistic means it is possible to determine more exactly the position of these Indo-Europeans in the framework of the Indo-European languages. They belonged to the Indo-Iranian group, and consisted presumably of tribes that, for reasons that cannot be determined, chose a westerly route

and came to Mesopotamia, while the majority of the Indo-Iranian tribes pursued a more easterly route in migrations that brought some of them to Iran, others to India. The evidence for this is seen primarily in the names of the kings of Mittanni, nearly all of which can be understood by reference to Indo-Iranian linguistic parallels. When allowance is made for the limited adaptability of cuneiform for the representation of Indo-European syllables and special sounds, names such as Artadima and Sudarna are recognizable as corresponding to the Sanskrit *rta-dhaman*, 'he who dwells in the holy law', and su-dharana 'he who supports well'. It is claimed that Tushratta can be explained as corresponding to *tvis-ratha*, 'he who possesses the awesome chariot'. Another piece of evidence for the Indo-Iranian origin of the Mittanni ruling class is the fact that at Washukkanni, beside the figures of the Mesopotamian pantheon, they introduced the worship of deities whose names are known from the Vedic literature of India; when about 1350 B. C. a treaty was concluded between the king of Mittanni, Mattiwaza (Sanskrit mati-vdja, 'he whose conquering power is prayer') and the Hittite ruler Suppiluliuma, the former calls upon the gods Mitra, Indra, Varuna, and the Nasatya as guarantors of his sworn obligations. In view of the fact that the influence of the Indo-Europeans in Hurrian circles was based in particular on their horse-drawn chariots of war, it is significant that the Hurrian description of the man who fights from a chariot, marianni, seems to be a word of Indo-European origin, properly with the commoner significance of 'young warrior'. Finally, material is extant that in a roundabout way strongly indicates that dressage was an Indo-European art; in the library of the Hittite kings at Hattusha [now Boghazkoy] an unusual cuneiform text was found, a textbook on the rearing of horses, attributed to one Kikkuli from Mittanni. The text is given in a Hittite translation, but must have been originally in Hurrian; the technical terms for some of the horse's movements are, however, Indo-Iranian, and appear in the form that had been used in the Hurrian original. Thus the word vartana is used for 'turning' (cf. Sanskrit vartate, 'turns'), and the numerals that appear in connexion with it are the following: 1. aika (Sanskrit eka); 3. tera (Sanskrit tri); 5. pansa (Sanskrit paizca); 7. satta (Sanskrit sapta); 9. nawa (Sanskrit nava).

In the mid fifteenth century, the kingdom of Mittanni embraced the lands from the Zagros east of the Tigris as far as northern Syria on the

Mediterranean. Assyria was incorporated as a province or vassal-state in this empire; the Assyrian rulers whose names are known from the Assyrian king-lists are city princes or governors who were completely dependent on the Indo-European rulers of the Hurrian empire. Just as was the case at Nuzi, most of the sources for the history of Mittanni are written in Akkadian, the language that was used for the international correspondence of the period; but the spoken language in Mittanni was Hurrian, and we have one single letter from Tushratta to Amenhotep III written entirely in Hurrian—a very long text that is still one of the chief sources of information on this language.

The earliest Mittanni king whose name is so far known is Parattarna, who can be dated to the period immediately after 1500 B.C. The geographical extent of the kingdom of Mittanni in the middle of the century, about 1450 B.C., is illustrated by the fact that Saushatar, then ruling at Washukkanni, appears as supreme authority both in Alalah [Tell Atshana] in northern Syria and in Nuzi, east of the Tigris. After many years' conflict with Thothmes III of Egypt over the control of Syria—wars that brought the Egyptian army as far as the Euphrates, and as far north as Aleppo and Carchemish—under Saushatar, Mittanni was recognized as a great power on a par with Egypt. Under Artadama (about 1430 B.C.), his successor, a daughter of the king of Mittanni was sent to Egypt as the bride of Thothmes IV; similarly, Amenhotep III married a daughter of Sudarna II of Mittanni (about 1400 B.C.). When Egyptian doctors and Egypt's own gods had not been successful in curing an illness from which Amenhotep III suffered, Sudarna sent the statue of the goddess Ishtar from her temple in Nineveh to his Egyptian confrere, and the ensuing recovery of the Egyptian king must have been powerful propaganda for the Assyrian goddess. Under Tushratta (about 1380 B.C.) friendly relations between the royal courts of Egypt and Mittanni still continued; Amenhotep IV, who as a religious reformer bore the name of Akhenaton, took one of Tushratta's daughters, Tatuhepa, into his harem.

During the reign of Tushratta a third great power appeared on the northern horizon: the Hittite kingdom in Asia Minor under Suppiluliuma entered a new period of greatness, inaugurated by an offensive against northern Syria. Suppiluliuma (1380-1346 B.C.) disputed the claim of the king of Mittanni to this land and began by annexing Carchemish; then he led his armies on in their plundering expedition to Washukkanni, which

fell. The Hittites who had in 1531 attacked Babylon and opened the way for the Kassites now once more came to play a part in Mesopotamian affairs. In Washukkanni, the Hittite attack was followed by revolts, whose inner causes are unknown; Tushratta was murdered by one of his own sons, and Mattiwaza, the crown prince, first sought political asylum in Babylon—unsuccessfully—and at length took refuge with his Hittite opponents (about 1350 B.C.). The Mittanni empire ceased to exist; however, under the name of Hanigalbat, some of the central possessions in the Habur area were reunited, and here Hurrian princes ruled over a strictly reduced area until about 1250. Only in the mountain regions that were the original home of the Hurrians, around Lake Van in the highlands of Armenia, could the Hurrian people entrench themselves; here they preserved their own culture and exercised political and military power which later Assyrian kings could never leave completely out of their calculations. The kingdom of Urartu that was established here is known from references in Assyrian inscriptions as early as 1200 B.C. The Urartian language spoken by the population of this mountain kingdom, which was used by its rulers in their own inscriptions with an adaptation of Mesopotamian cuneiform, is closely akin to the form of Hurrian known from the time of the kingdom of Mittanni. Despite repeated Assyrian attempts to destroy the power of Urartu, the land continued as a political unit until 585 B.C.

The Assyrians took advantage of the Hittite conquest of Washukkanni and the imminent collapse of the Mittanni empire to liberate themselves from foreign domination. The rare sources dealing with internal conditions in Assur under Hurrian occupation can offer us no information on Assyrian efforts to offer resistance to the occupying power, though such must have undoubtedly taken place; we do know, however, that an attempt at revolt was made about 1450, and that it was suppressed by Saushatar of Mittanni, and that after this incident he removed the treasure of Assur to Washukkanni-among other things he had an Assyrian gate, studded with gold and silver, set up in his capital. From about 1400 inscriptions begin to appear at Assur in some quantity. The rulers, who still continued to be vassals of such kings of Mittanni as Artadama and Sudarna, report on fortification works at Assur, and this may well be interpreted as an indication of a weakening of the hold of Mittanni kings on the city.

The beginning of renewed independence for Assyria can be attributed to the reign of Assur-nadin-ahhe II (c. 1393-1384 B.C.). From the Assur of his time we only know the signature with which he caused his bricks to be stamped: 'Assur-nadin-ahhe, viceroy of the god Assur'. Thus in his official designation he laid no claim to territorial possessions. We know, however, from the archives at Tell el-Amarna that his envoys obtained audience of Amenhotep III, and that he received economic assistance from Egypt; it may well be that the Egyptians saw in him a possible ally against the Hittites, whose expansion into Syria at that time threatened to conflict with the interests of the Pharaohs. Assur-uballit (1356-1320 B.C.) was the first to consolidate Assyria anew as a significant power in the Near East; it was under this king that the Middle Assyrian kingdom was established. At this time there was some doubt in diplomatic circles as to the extent to which Assyria was or was not to be regarded as a vassal-state of Babylon. The Kassite king of Babylon, Burnaburiash, was of the opinion that the Egyptian court had slighted him by receiving the envoys of Assur-uballit; on a later occasion he also complained to the Pharaoh Tutankhamon that Assur-uballit in his letters to Amenhotep IV (Akhenaton) had described himself as 'great king'. Nevertheless, Egyptian envoys soon appeared at the court of Assur-uballit, and relations between Babylon and Assur improved; the understanding between southern and northern Mesopotamia was strengthened by a marriage between a Kassite prince of Babylon, Karaindash, and a daughter of Assur-uballit named Muballitat-Shru'a. So it can be understood that the last king of Mittanni, Mattiwaza, after his flight from Washukkanni, should apply to the king of Babylon for protection without receiving any sympathy. Babylon had by now already accepted Assur as a Mesopotamian ally in the current game of power-politics and had written off Mittanni as an entity that belonged to a period now closed.

What then was the significance of the Hurrian interlude on the stage of the Near East? Surely the two to three hundred years, during which settled groups of Hurrians and Indo-Iranian condottieri had a decisive influence on historical development in Assyria and the lands far to the west, cannot have passed without leaving any trace behind.

Survey of the more important dates and events of the period of the Kingdom of Mittanni

	Assyria	Mittanni	Egypt	Hittites	Babylon
77	Ishmē-Dagan				
		Armed Hurrian expansion begins			
out 50-1500?		Mittanni consolidated			
31				Murshili I leads campaign against Babylon	
out 1500-1400		Nuzi			
out 1500		Parattarna			
out 50	Revolt against Mittanni	Saushatar	Thothmes III		
out 50		Artadama (daughter marries Thothmes IV)	Thothmes IV		
out 00	Assyrian struggle for liberation begins	Sudatta II (daughter marries Amenhotep III)	Amenhotep III		
out 95-1384	Assur-rādīn-abhē		Assyrian envoys in Egypt		
80-1346		Tushratta (daughter marries Amenhotep IV)	Amenhotep IV (Akhenaton)	Suppiluliuma	
out 80-1350			Amarna period		
out 1350		Mattiwaza			Burnaburiash (son Kasindash marries daughter of Assur-uballit)
56-1320	Assur-uballit (daughter marries Babylonian prince)				
ll about 50		Kings of Hanigalbat			

A cultural element that the Old World undoubtedly owes to the Hurrians and their Indo-European rulers is the horse. As a draught animal in war and peace, the horse became universal in the Near East after the

arrival of the Hurrians. Evidence of the part the Hurrians played in this revolution in cultural history can be traced as far as Egypt, in that marianni, the term for a chariot-warrior, was adopted as a loan-word in Egyptian. The breeding of horses was a Hurrian legacy to posterity; military operations involving the use of the horse and war-chariot came to be of decisive importance in Assyrian warfare in later times. It was to become evident that this was an effective method of fighting. Not many years ago, a German Assyriologist collected a group of texts from Assur, showing quite clearly that dressage was practised by the Assyrians in pursuance of the Hurrian example. These texts, datable precisely to the middle Assyrian period (thirteenth to twelfth centuries B.C.), give (in Akkadian) directions on the breaking in and taming of horses to be used in team-work. This is not a direct translation of Kikkuli's treatise on the training of horses, which is known to us in a Hittite version, but there can nevertheless hardly be any doubt that the Assyrian version was based on a Hurrian original source.

Later Assyrian art—free sculpture and relief—did not seek its models in the artistic style of Babylon. Although the exact relationship is still far from clear, it is not unlikely that the Assyrians, who had first found a congenial form of expression in the heroic style of the Akkad period, took over important elements from the art of the Hurrians, though of the latter we have but little knowledge; future excavations in the areas under the control of Mittanni will make it possible to amplify the fragmentary impression we have at present of Hurrian artistic products. The representation of fantastic creatures—figures with animal bodies and human heads, or human figures with wings and the heads of birds—is explained by some as traits due to Hurrian art which found favour with the Assyrians. Certain architectural peculiarities in Assyrian building-practice are also probably fundamentally Hurrian; but both in architecture and narrative relief art, which was particularly developed by the Assyrians, there may also very well be some Hittite influence. The question is further complicated by the fact that relations between the Hittites and Assyrians during the course of the second millennium B.C. were very largely maintained through the agency of the Hurrians.

One sphere in which durable Hurrian influence on the Assyria of later times can be demonstrated with certainty is that of religion. The Hurrian storm-god Teshup and his consort Hepat took their places in the Assyrian

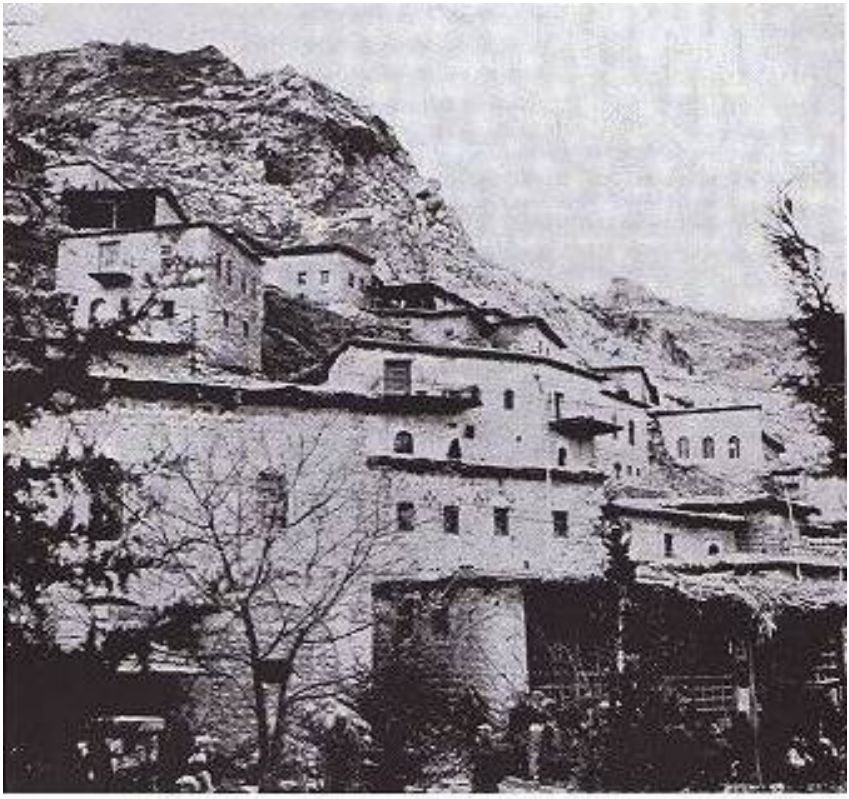
pantheon once and for all, and together with these two principal deities other Hurrian gods and goddesses were received into Assyrian religion. In the temple of the god Assur a banquet was held for the gods of Assyria every year in March, the time of celebration of the Babylonian and Assyrian New Year; there is reliable evidence that this ritual was observed as early as about 1300 B.C., if not earlier. One of the chief events in connexion with this festival was a feeding (tdkultu) of the gods who were present—represented presumably by their statues—having been invited from the temples in all the cities of Assyria. The procedure in this ceremony was for the Assyrian king to bear offerings to the chief god of each temple, whereupon an officiating priest would recite all the other minor gods connected with that deity and worshipped in his temple; the priest concluded the proceedings by saying prayers for the city of that deity, for the land and for the king. Usually, the gods of Babylonia were also invited to this feast. When the whole ceremony was over, all the deities present were called upon to bestow blessings upon the one who had entertained them royally, namely the Assyrian ruler, as well as upon the land of Assyria. The texts containing the order of procedure in this ritual provide us, therefore, with an excellent catalogue of the deities worshipped in Assyria right up to the end of the seventh century B.C., some copies of the text belonging to that late period. In this collection we find Hurrian deities such as Belibria, Halladir, Hepat, Kumarbi (father of the gods in the Hurrian pantheon), the goddess Naparbi, Samanuha—a god who is also invoked in the treaty of Mattiwaza, the king of Mittanni, with Suppiluliuma—Shupirbi, and Teshup, besides a series of other gods that may well prove on further investigation to be of Hurrian origin. That so many Hurrian deities had gained admission to the range of religious concepts held by the Assyrians is certain evidence that Hurrian ideas had profoundly permeated Assyrian society. Future research into cultural history will have the task of investigating the actual significance of these facts.

It has been the purpose of this short account to demonstrate that the appearance of the Hurrians in Mesopotamia can be comprehensively elucidated on the basis of written source-material from the moment that the kingdom of Mittanni became a reality. As to the Hurrians in Mittanni, we know a considerable amount about them through texts from Nuzi, from sites of discoveries in Syria, and from Babylonian, Hittite, and Egyptian

sources. On the other hand we are poorly informed as to their antecedents and their past history in the mountains. The Mari letters brought to light the Turukkaean tribes, which were perhaps Hurrian or were, at least from time to time, commanded by Hurrian military leaders; but with the limitations of their range of interest, the Mari letters cannot provide us with a true impression of Hurrian society as it must have existed in the Zagros mountains. Another question that still remains unanswered is the problem of the dating of the assumption of command of Hurrian tribal groups by Indo-Iranian leaders—an act of collaboration that led to the establishment of Mittanni; we also lack information on the nature of this collaboration in its early stages.

(C) Assyrian Empire (*c.* 1350-612 B. C.)

Assyrian Annals-Reports to the God Assur-Middle Assyrian Period-The Aramaeans-Assyria reaches the Mediterranean-The Neo-Assyrian Kingdom-Assurnasirpal-Kalah (Nimrud)Excavations-The North-west Palace of Assurnasirpal-The Nimrud Stele-Shalmaneser III-Fort Shalmaneser-Excavation of a tell-Esarhaddon-Egypt conquered-Treaty with Ramataia - Assurbanipal-Collapse of Assyria.



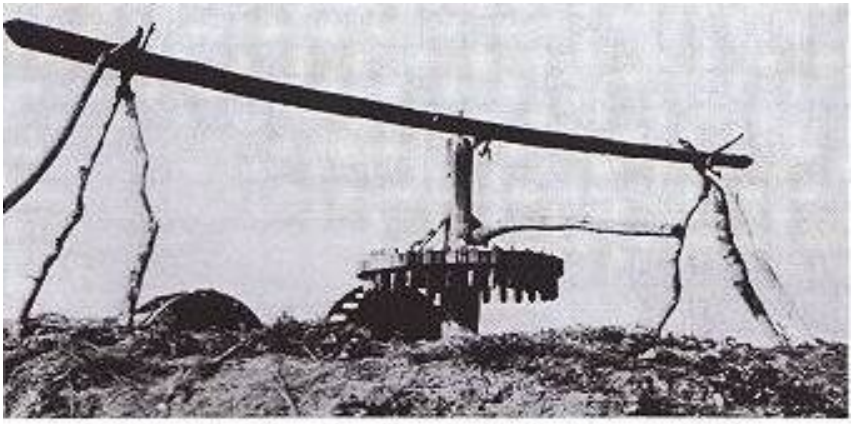
9 (a). 'Houses that hang on the mountain-side like eyries'. The Kurdish vaillage of Aqra, in the Qara Dagh mountains north-east of Mosul.

The history of Assyria from the foundation of the Middle Assyrian kingdom until the fall of Nineveh to the combined Babylonian and Median armies in 612 B.C. will be better known to most of the readers of this book

than the periods we have so far been considering. The Assyrian inscriptions elucidating the development of these centuries have long been available in accessible translations. The important sources for the history of the Assyrian empire are, of course, the official inscriptions that begin to appear in ever-increasing numbers from the time of Assur-uballit; at the same time their extent and detail steadily grow. A new type of literature, the annals, appear for the first time in Mesopotamia with the Assyrian king Arik-den-ili (about 1300 B.C.). In this style of document, the ruler records his campaigns and describes his conquests year by year of his reign. The type seems to have been developed in Assyria in imitation of Hittite models. By their choice of the Babylonian dialect for the annals, the Middle Assyrian kings establish a connexion with Shamshi-Adad I; the literary style of the annals is akin to the style adopted by Shamshi-Adad in his official inscriptions at Assur (see footnote 5). In these Middle Assyrian annals, Assyrian dialect forms often occur in the Babylonian text; but this aberration of style is eventually eliminated, and the Assyrian annals comprise texts in a purely Babylonian language, and cannot therefore be employed as sources for the study of Assyrian dialects.

There is an unbroken tradition of style from the first Assyrian annals, which comprise a list of the military campaigns of Arik-den-ili [preserved in fragmentary form] to the last, dating from the time of Assurbanipal (about 650 B.C.)—the famous ten-sided prisms the text of which occupies in translation between 30 and 40 pages of a normal book. It has been estimated that in their work on these last annals the Assyrian scribes must have impressed their stylus into the clay some 100,000 times before the last line had been written and the date of the completion of the work could be added. While the annalistic form of literature thus developed and reached what must be regarded as perfection in its limited scope, the chances of excavation in Assyrian cities have caused the amount of archive material available for research to be comparatively limited as far as the later periods are concerned, a marked contrast with the boundless quantity of letters of the earlier periods preserved at Mari and the Babylonian cities. Only the last hundred years of the existence of Assyria have produced letters—about 1,500 of them—to and from the kings who had their palace at Nineveh, among them Assurbanipal; they were discovered during the excavations of the ruins of Nineveh in the course of the last century and are now preserved in the

British Museum. In addition, excavations during the last decade at Nimrud, the Assyrian city of Kalah, have brought to light a few letters of the late Assyrian period; of these, some 40 have so far been published. The German excavations of Assur, lasting from 1903 to 1914, revealed a considerable amount of textual material, principally texts of an annalistic character—as



9 (b). Primitive Iraqi water-hoist (saqiya) for irrigation: Mosul region.

well as a quantity of administrative and juridical documents and the collection of literary texts in the library of Assur—but produced only about 100 letters of the Middle Assyrian period. Therefore, reconstitution of the history of Assyria at the end of the second and beginning of the first millennium must in the first instance be based on the official royal inscriptions, whose interpretation can however often be checked from philological or archaeological evidence inside and outside Assyria.

With the Assyrian royal inscriptions as the principal sources the picture that can thus be drawn is that of an empire on the road to world-domination, or rather control of the whole of the known world of the period. The motive force was the desire of the god Assur for supremacy over all other deities; the means was a military organization of an effectiveness hitherto unknown. It was the weapons of the god Assur that the Assyrian armies took to the uttermost bounds of the world of that time. It was his wars that the Assyrians fought; it was to Assur that account was rendered when a campaign had been concluded. The battle-scenes in the Assyrian reliefs show the king accompanied by the god, who hovers over him in his

winged solar disc. When Assur raises his bow, the king's arrow at the same time lies, ready for shooting, against his bowstring; if the king's bow is at rest, Assur's is likewise idle. The conduct of the Assyrian army is portrayed with gusto to provide an example of cruelty unparalleled in world history, and the Assyrian kings appear as brutal Oriental despots; nevertheless the areas that came under Assyrian domination have hardly ever, before or since, enjoyed better administration. Without claiming that Assyrian soldiers were

10 (a). The hills of Dokan, 1917.

noticeably humane, we may venture to assert that neither were they more cruel than other warriors of the period. Our impression of the methods of the Assyrian military machine is, of course, coloured by the Old Testament view of this conquering people. The reports and representations of the Assyrians themselves—the dry accounts in the annals of fallen enemies, the portrayal in reliefs of captured opponents being flayed alive or impaled on stakes—ought possibly also to be interpreted with caution or viewed with reservations; these sources are of course tendentious in the sense that they are reports to the god Assur. The author of the annals—the king, with the

assistance of his historiographers—and the artist who carved the narrative scenes of battle on the reliefs, made every effort to glorify the power of the god; in his victories, the king represents the god of the nation, and it is only the victories that can be reported.

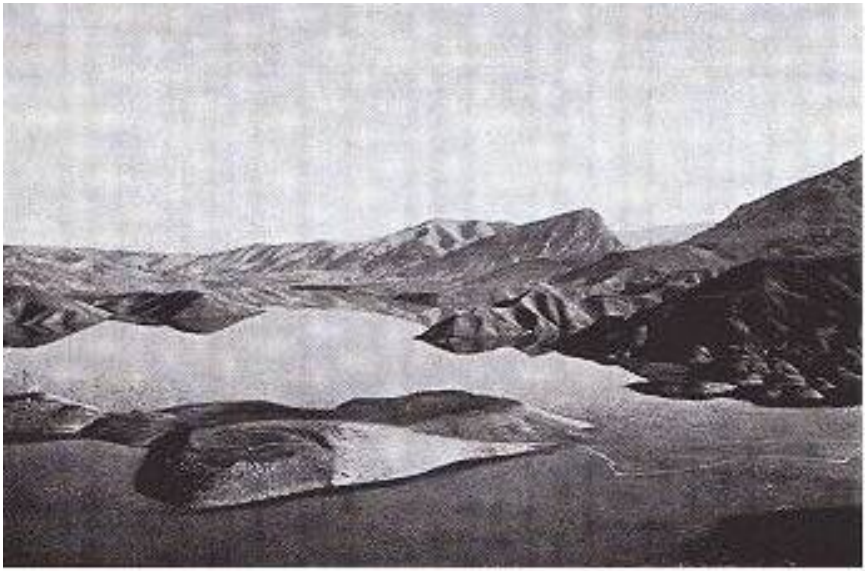
It is consistent with our impression of the Assyrian institution of kingship that a farmer could have such a letter as the following sent to his ruler:

To the king, my lord: [from] your servant Marduk-shumusur. May it go well with the king my lord. May the gods Nabu and Marduk be gracious to the king, my lord.

The father of the king, my lord, granted me a field in the land of Halahhi, a field that yields corn to the measure of 10 homer. For 14 years I have had the cultivation of the field, and nobody disputed my rights. Now the district-governor has come to the land of Barhalzi; he has molested the farmer, pillaged his house, and taken the field from him. The king, my lord, knows that I am a poor man, that I keep watch on behalf of the king, and that I am not negligent regarding the [interests of the] palace. Now that the king sees that I have been robbed of the field, let the king restore to me my rights. Let me not die of hunger.

The Middle Assyrian period, that begins at about the time of the fall of Mittanni, comes to an end about 950 B.C. The period includes important rulers such as Adad-nirari I (c. 1297-1266 B.C.) Shalmaneser I (1265-1235), Tukulti-Ninurta I (1235-1198) and Tiglath-Pileser I (c. 1116-1078). The first task of these rulers was to secure the northern and north-eastern frontiers of Assyria against the mountain tribes, among whom the Turukkaeans still figure prominently; afterwards they turned towards the west, where continuous wars with the kings of Hanigalbat, the successor-state to Mittanni, brought the frontiers of Assyria further and further away from the cities of the heartland and made further areas dependent on the might of Assyria. Along the Euphrates, Aramaean tribes had settled; now for the first time we hear of this Semitic people, who came to play an important part in the first millennium. The mountain kingdom of Urartu, where the Hurrians had steadfastly held out, is mentioned for the first time by Shalmaneser I. It is only towards Babylon that these Assyrian kings, like their successors of a later period maintained a policy of conciliation and

reserve, punctuated occasionally by episodes of armed aggression against the neighbouring state to the south. Even when the possibility existed of incorporating Babylon in Assyria under an Assyrian viceroy, it was rarely



10 (b). The hills of Dokan behind the completed dam, 1959.

utilized; the kings of Assur restricted themselves to the replacement of a Babylonian ruler they regarded as a dangerous opponent by another Babylonian whose intentions were presumed to be more friendly towards Assyrian interests. Elaborate regard was paid to Babylonian national pride. The reason for this must be sought in the fact that the Assyrians recognized their cultural debt to southern Mesopotamia. In most important matters there were more points of agreement than of difference between the Babylonians and the Assyrians. Assur had in times past been subject to direct influence from the cities of the south. In the Assyrian pantheon, Babylonian and Sumerian deities enjoyed an equal footing with Assyrian gods; the god Assur was interpreted as another form of Enlil. The destruction of Babylonian temples, and contempt for Babylonian religious and cultural institutions, were therefore acts of sacrilege that few Assyrian rulers were prepared to perpetrate.

The weakness of Assyrian policy towards Babylon may well have contributed to a brief Babylonian renaissance that took place about 1120 B.C., when Babylonian armies fought victoriously in Elam; but the

initiative quickly returned to Assyria. Tiglath-Pileser I was the first Assyrian king to lead his troops to the Mediterranean. Under his successors, namely his three sons who followed one another on the throne in quick succession, most of these gains were frittered away, and the zenith of the Middle Assyrian period was passed. In this period, when neither Assyria nor Babylon was capable of interfering in affairs beyond their own confines, the Aramaeans consolidated their power in small kingdoms in Syria along the Euphrates;. further south along the Mediterranean coast, Judah and Israel were united in one kingdom which, under David (c. 1000-970 B.C.) and Solomon (c. 970-933), achieved considerable political influence even north of its own frontiers.

The neo-Assyrian kingdom (c. 950-612 B.C.) was a re-creation and further extension of the work of the middle Assyrian rulers, and based itself on their ideology, the desire of the god Assur for domination to the widest possible extent. After a process of consolidation under Adad-nirari II (909-889 B.C.) and Tukulti-Ninurta II (888-884), it was possible for Assurnasirpal[17] (883-859) to spend a considerable part of the first five years of his reign in establishing a new capital, Kalah [now Nimrud]. In this city, whose ruins lie near the eastern bank of the Tigris about 25 miles south of Mosul, the administration of Assyria was established for most of the ninth century; later Assyrian kings, too, chose it as the site of their residence, and it retained its importance until 612 B.C., when it was taken by Median troops.

In the history of Assyrian archaeology Nimrud has been a famous name since 1845, when A. H. Layard began the excavation of this mound of ruins. In the course of a number of subsequent excavations lasting till 1851, this British pioneer of Mesopotamian archaeology made discoveries of the greatest importance for our present-day knowledge of Assyrian architecture, freestanding sculpture, reliefs, and arts and crafts; and the inscriptions discovered by Layard can nearly all be described as classics of Assyriology. On a few occasions during the nineteenth century further excavations of short duration were undertaken at Nimrud. In 1949, on the initiative of the

[17] Actually Assurnasirpal II, since the name had already been used by an earlier king in the Middle Assyrian period. The Akkadian form of the name is 'Assurnisir-apli' ('the God Assur protects his son and heir').

British School of Archaeology in Iraq, excavations at Nimrud were renewed on more systematic lines, under the direction of M. E. L. Mallowen; on these, all the refinements of modern archaeological methods were brought to bear. Since the spring of 1960, the excavations, hitherto continued every spring for a season of two months duration, have been directed by David Oates.

The tell of Nimrud (see Fig. 3) is about 660 yards long and 330 yards wide, and rises from the surrounding area to a height of about 65 feet. In the north-western corner of the tell, or acropolis, rise the ruins of the ancient temple tower, the Zikkurat, like a conical peak to a height of 100 feet above the surrounding fields. This tell contains only ruins of palaces, administrative buildings, and temples; the remains of the city itself lie to the east and north; the circumference of the city can still be followed along the line of low hillocks that represent the ruins of the ancient city wall. The monumental buildings of Kalah lay in the south-western corner of a fortified city that had an area of about 1.5 square miles; the periphery of the outer city walls amounts to some five miles. On Plate 7 (a) the outlines of the outer wall can be seen in the background behind the excavation area.

Assurnasirpal chose a site where 400 years earlier one of the Middle Assyrian kings, Shalmaneser I, had laid out a small town. In the time of Assurnasirpal the river Tigris still flowed in its southward course along what is now the foot of the tell; but at some time between 600 and 400 B.C. it changed its course, and now flows a mile or two further to the west at the foot of the low hills that bound the steppe of Al-Jazira. When in 401 B.C. Xenophon marched towards the Black Sea with his Ten Thousand Greeks, he was able to follow the former bed of the river past Kalah, which he calls Larissa, and describes as a derelict city that had once been inhabited by Medes. 'Its wall had a breadth of 25 feet, and a height of 100 feet, and the surrounding wall was two parasangs in circumference; it was built of clay bricks, but below there was a stone foundation 20 feet high.' In this account there is more than one misapprehension. There was never any Median occupation of Nimrud; the Medes destroyed the city. And the stone foundation mentioned by Xenophon is in fact a quay-structure of colossal proportions laid in the old river-bed and sealed with bitumen, a quay wall of a thickness of 16 feet, stretching along the edge of the city. This quay wall of squared stones, built by Assurnasirpal, was excavated for part of its

length in 1952; it reaches a height of 30 feet above the old river-bed. Among its functions was that of serving as a wharf for the river-boats bringing building material for Kalah from quarries on the west bank of the Tigris.

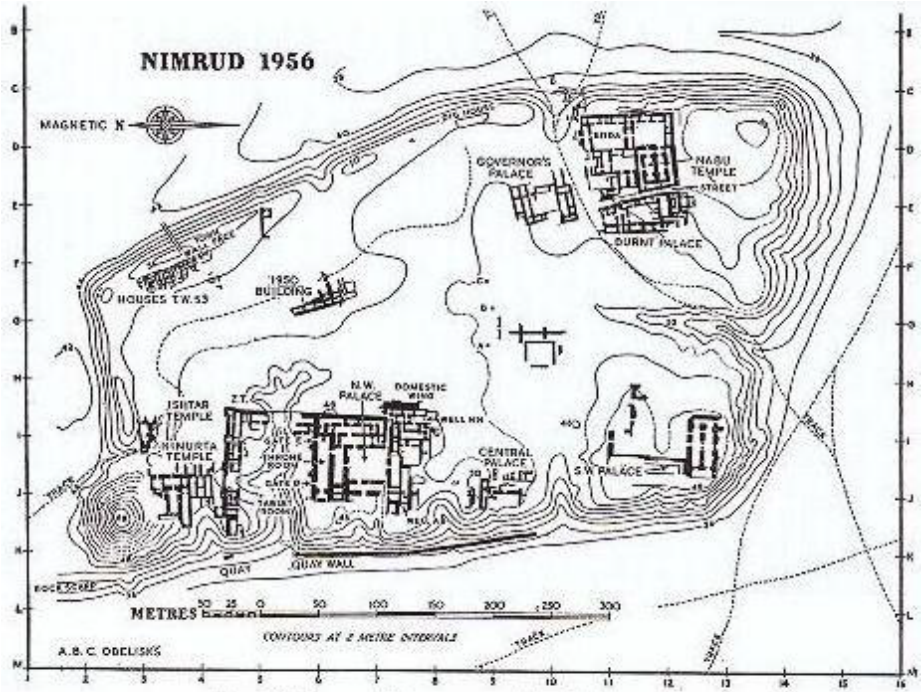


Fig. 3. Plan of the acropolis at Numrud.

Above the quay wall, opposite a temple dedicated to the god Ninurta, Assurnasirpal caused his builders to erect a palace of enormous dimensions, about 425 feet wide and 650 feet long. From its position on the acropolis, it is known as the North-West Palace. The southern part of the building contained the private apartments, the northern part comprised the official quarters and the audience-hall (33 feet by 130 feet), in which the king's throne was installed. The facade of the North-West Palace was adorned with friezes in relief, carved in the light-grey alabastine limestone that was used everywhere in the palace where the walls were not simply faced with plaster and occasionally provided with wall-paintings in bright colours. Some of the reliefs of the facade had already been excavated by Layard; but the majority were not discovered until the recent excavations. Plate 3 (a) shows the upper half of one of the newly discovered reliefs; three Syrian princes are shown moving towards one of the entrance portals of the audience-hall

with their hands raised in sign of submission. At the time of the excavation there were still traces of white pigment in the eyes of the figures, and the pupils were picked out in black. Above the reliefs, a long cuneiform text is inscribed, the so-called 'standard inscription' of Assurnasirpal. This is an inscription in which the king gives a survey of the conquests that have taken place during his reign up to date, an account of the subjection of various areas that had extended the power of Assur, or a claim that the weapons of Assur have once more gleamed above the lands already under Assyrian domination, either as provinces under Assyrian governors or as vassal-states whose own rulers bowed to the might of Assur. The inscription is carried again and again all over the building in a standardized form; a photograph of one of the finest and best preserved copies, from a wall of a corridor behind the audience-hall, is shown on the jacket of this book, and a detail is shown on Plate 14 (a) as eloquent testimony of the skill of the Assyrian masons and an example of the beauty of Assyrian monumental script.

Flanking the two doorways of the audience-hall, colossal figures of winged bulls with human heads were set up as guardians of the entrances by Assurnasirpal, the first Assyrian king to carry out this procedure. The excavators found them overturned, one broken in its fall (Plate 3 [b]). The Iraq Directorate of Antiquities later restored them (Plates 4 and 5) so that they now possess a majesty that can hardly leave the modern observer unmoved; how these features, an idealization of Assurnasirpal himself, must have impressed vassals, envoys, and governors who came to seek audience with the king, as he awaited them on his throne! In the opening of the doorway, just below the 16-foot high figure, a stone slab was placed with the standard inscription carved on it. Only along the edges, where the stone reaches the walls of the doorway, are the symbols sharp and dear. The rest of the text has been worn away by the passage of feet. Just as when the smell of burning assails one's nostrils in the excavation of carbonized timber in a building that went up in flames 25 centuries ago, so here the ancient past becomes particularly vivid. The blue roller, the pied bee-eaters, and other tropical birds that build their nests in the ruins among banks of poppies and thistles, the silence amid the walls bedecked with reliefs, walls that enhance the sound of the visitor's footsteps on flagstones that were laid by Assyrian craftsmen in the service of Assurnasirpal, and the sound of the shepherd-boy's pipe and of the bell round the neck of the bell—whether coming up

from a distant village by the Tigris—such impressions unite to produce a feeling that at Nimrud only a short interval of time separates us from the participants in the banquet given by Assurnasirpal to celebrate the inauguration of his palace.

This banquet became known through the monumental inscription on a limestone stele found in I951 in front of the entrance to the throne-room in the North-West Palace. The stele, 4 feet 2 inches high, had escaped Layard's quest for antiquities in an almost incomprehensible manner, but has now found its place among the series of stately texts comprising the monumental inscriptions of the Assyrian kings. Assurnasirpal here gives an account of his activity as a builder, mentions the royal gardens, his hunting, and the establishment of a zoological garden, and finally describes in great detail the festivities accompanying the inauguration of the new palace. The canal Patihegalli mentioned in the text was an artificially-contrived arm of the Great Zab that began at a point 6 miles south of Nimrud, opposite the modern town of Quwair, and supplied water to the area east of the city, to supplement the water system fed by the Tigris. The course of the canal can still be traced. It began with a system of locks, linking it with the Zab, devised by Assurnasirpal's engineers; it was carried through a tunnel driven through the rock at Negub from vertical shafts. The locks remain to this day in the rock, just as they were cut almost 3,000 years ago. The following is a translation of the inscription on the stele, now in the museum at Mosul:

The palace of Assurnasirpal, of him who is the priest of Assur, exalted by the gods Enlil and Ninurta, beloved of Anum and Dagan, the strong one among the great gods; the mighty king, king of the world, king of Assyria, son of Tukuld-Ninurta, the great king, the mighty king, king of the world, king of Assyria, grandson of Adad-nirari, the great king, the mighty king, king of the world, king of Assyria; the valiant hero, who fares forth with the help of Assur, his lord, and who has no rival in the four quarters of the world; the exalted shepherd, who has dread of no struggle, the powerful torrent that none can withstand; the king who has subdued those who were not subject to him, he who has overcome the whole of mankind; the king who fares forth with the help of the great gods, his lords, he whose hand has conquered all lands and taken all mountain ranges and received their tribute, obtained hostages, and asserted his power over all lands; the king who caused to bow themselves before his feet the lands beyond the Tigris

and right up to the mountains of Lebanon and the great sea [the Mediterranean], the whole land of Lage and the land of Suhi as far as Rapiqu, he whose hand took [the regions around] the sources of the river Subnat as far as Urartu.

I travelled [the area] from the mountain pass to Kiruri as far as Gilzani, from the other side of the Little Zab as far as the town of Tilbari, that lies north of Zaban, from Tilshabtani to Tilshazabdani, the towns of Hirimu and Harutu, fortresses in Babylonia, to the frontiers of my land. I have counted the inhabitants of the mountain passes at Babite as far as Hashmar as inhabitants in my own land. Assur, the great lord, has treated me with favour and has proclaimed with his clear declaration my mastery and my power.

I, Assurnasirpal, king, whose renown is mighty upon the deliberation of my heart, after the god Ea has granted me all embracing insight, I took anew Kalah and altered its former hill[18]; I dug down to the level of the sub-soil water and from here filled up its foundation terrace to a height of 120 courses of bricks.

I established a palace [with suites of rooms adorned with] timber of the box, mulberry, cedar, pistachio-tree, tamarisk and poplar, eight [such] palace [suites] there for my royal residence and for my royal pleasure; I adorned them lavishly. I furnished its doors, made of cedar, cypress and juniper, box and mulberry, with bronze fittings and attached them to the doorways with bronze bolts. I portrayed my renowned bravery [that I had displayed] in the mountain lands and the districts by the coast through which I passed, and the conquest of all these lands, in pictures of enamel work on the walls; I caused bricks to be baked with blue [enamel] and placed them over the doors. I removed the subject peoples of the lands that my hands had conquered, namely those belonging to the land of Suhi, the town of [....]-rabi, the whole extent of Zamua, the lands of Bitzamani and Kirruri, the town of Sirqu, that lies by a crossing of the Euphrates, and a number of persons from Lage in the land of the Hittites and [the people that belong to] the Hattian Lubarna, and placed them therein.

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[18] 'Hill' in the sense of 'ruin-mound'. The Akkadian word tillu is identical with the Arabic tell.

I dug a canal from the Great Zab, cutting through the rock at its summit, and called it Pati-hegalli ['that which opens (?) for abundance']. I caused the meadow tracts by the Tigris to be richly irrigated, and planted gardens there. Everywhere I planted vines, and gave the best of them to Assur, my lord, and to the temples in my land.

I presented the city to Assur, my lord.

From the lands in which I had fared, and from the mountains that I had passed, [....] they cultivated [....] in the gardens the trees and the plants that I had seen: cedar, cypress, box[?], fir, 'medicinal plant[19], juniper, lammu-oak, date-palm, U-willow, mulberry, bitter almond....[20]

In Kalah, my royal capital, I founded temples that had not existed before; the temple of Enlil and Ninurta, the temple for Adad and Shala, the temple for Gula, the temple for Sin, the temple for Nabu, the temple for Ishtar, mistress of the land, the temple for the Sibitti gods, the temple for Ishtar-Kitmuri, the temple for the great gods I founded anew in the city and established the oath of the great gods, my lords, in them. I adorned them lavishly. I laid beams of cedar over them for roofing, and I caused to be made high cedar doors which I furnished with bronze fittings. I caused pictures of gleaming bronze to be set in [on?] their doors. Their divine majesty I adorned with red gold and precious stones. Objects of gold that my hands had taken as booty I dedicated to them. The temple of Ninurta my lord I provided with inlay of gold and lapis-lazuli; I caused bronze tablets to be set up to right and left of them, I placed dragons of gold at the foot [of the temple] and I appointed feasts [for Ninurta] in the months Shabat and Ulul. As to his feast in the month Shabat, I established a glorious procession (and amassed) drink-offerings and incense.

I caused a statue of my royal person, an exact representation of my own countenance, to be made in red gold and precious stones and set it up before my lord Ninurta. The abandoned cities that had fallen into decay in the time of my fathers, I caused to be inhabited again and countless people to

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[19] The translation depends on the interpretation of the Sumerian symbols used to write the name of this plant. It is possible that the ideogram represents an Akkadian word for a particular plant; but the Akkadian reading of the symbols is at present unknown.

[20] Here there follows a series of botanical descriptions of nuts and so forth: these terms have not yet been subjected to detailed investigation and cannot as yet be accurately translated.

dwell in them. I restored, equipped, and embellished the most prominent temples in the area of my land and stored up barley and straw in them.

Ninurta and Palil, to whom my ministry is beloved, granted me the wild animals of the field and bade me go hunting. I killed 450 mighty lions and I slew 350 wild beasts with [the help of] my .... -chariots and in the onslaught of my sovereign dignity; I brought down zoo ostriches, as if (they were) birds in a cage, and coo elephants did I capture .... ; 50 live wild bulls, 140 live ostriches, 20 mighty lions did I catch with my weapons and my .... ; five wild elephants did I receive from the governor of Suhi and the governor of Lubda; they came with me on my march. I gathered herds of bulls, lions and ostriches and male and female monkeys and I let them breed. To the land of Assyria I added more land, and to its people more peoples with a view to [....].

At the time when Assurnasirpal, king of Assyria, decked out the palace, the joy of his heart, a palace that sets forth all the skill of Kalah, then he invited Assur, the great lord, and all the gods of the land to it. 1,000 barley-fed oxen, 1,000 young cattle and sheep from the stalls, 14,000 ordinary [? Literally, trader's] sheep (from the flocks) belonging to my mistress Ishtar, 1,000 fattened sheep, 1,000 lambs, 500 game-birds, 500 gazelles, 1,000 large birds, 500 geese, 500 cranes [?], 1,000 suki-birds, 1,000 garibu-birds, 10,000 doves, 10,000 . . . .-doves, 10,000 small birds, 10,000 fish..... 10,000 eggs, 10,000 loaves, 10,000 measures of beer, 10,000 measures of wine in skin-containers[21].

When I decked out the palace at Kalah [there were present] 47,074 workers and women, summoned from all districts in my land; 5,000 eminent officials, envoys from Suhi, Hindani, Hattina, from the Hittites, Tyre, Sidon, from Gurgumu, Malida, Hubushki, from Gilzanu, Kume, and Musasir; [moreover] 16,000 souls from Kalah (and) 1,500 Zariqu-officials from all my palaces. The total number was 69,574. For ten days I entertained the joyful peoples from all the lands together with the people of

[21] This translation omits the names of a number of special dishes, spices, and delicacies that are only partly intelligible. One of these terms, the Akkadian gubibate, is perhaps identical with the Arab-Turkish meat-dish kebab, or with the kubba-dish that is still regarded as a particular delicacy in the Mosul area.

Kalah; I gave them wine, I let them bathe, I anointed them and honoured them, and then sent them back to their lands in peace and joy.

Among the foreign envoys invited to Assurnasirpal's banquet, most represented western areas; for Assyria, the most important result of the wars of conquest was the pacification of Aramaean states along the Euphrates and all through Syria to the Mediterranean. It is to be noted, however, that envoys from Musasir were also present. This city was situated in the Armenian mountains west of Lake Urmia in a Hurrian-Urartian area. The preamble to the stele—inscription given above reports in accord with the standard inscription of Assurnasirpal—on a campaign through the Babite pass in the mountains east of Assyria; and the annals of the king, recounting his military campaigns in chronological order, mention expeditions against mountain-tribes in the first, third, and fourth years of his reign. Assurnasirpal thus received a diplomatic mission from Musasir, while his armies extended their ravages along the Little Zab where the river approaches the district known in antiquity as Zamua, the modern Shehrizor south of the Kurdish town of Sulaimaniya. From a number of indications, the Babite pass can be identified with the gorge now known as the Bazian pass, on the road from Kirkuk to Sulaimaniya. The other details given in his inscriptions regarding place-names and the location of tribes remain of little use, until excavations in the mountain areas produce more definite points of reference for the topography of this area in ancient times.

Shalmaneser III, the son of Assurnasirpal, who succeeded him on the throne (858-824 B.C.), was a great commander, and as a statesman perhaps even greater than his father. In his dealings with the Aramaean states to the west he maintained his hold on the provinces his father had brought into dependence on Assyria by the exercise of a restlessly persistent policy. It was not possible for him, however, to effect the conquest of Damascus, a goal of many years' standing. Cavalry, which had first begun to assume importance in Assyrian warfare under Assurnasirpal, was evolved as a formidable unit of the army; his representations in relief work, such as those on the famous bronze gates of Balawat, show such devices as siege-machines and battering-rams in use against besieged cities. The Assyrian army is also shown at the sources of the Euphrates and Tigris; but the Assyrians were denied any real advance in the mountains of Armenia by the kingdom of Urartu.

Shalmaneser also used Kalah as his capital city. During his reign there was laid out in the south-western corner of the outer city a building that came to reflect in a peculiar manner the history of Assyria up to the year in which Kalah and Nineveh were overcome and pillaged by the Babylonians and Medes, who had come together in opposition to the common enemy.

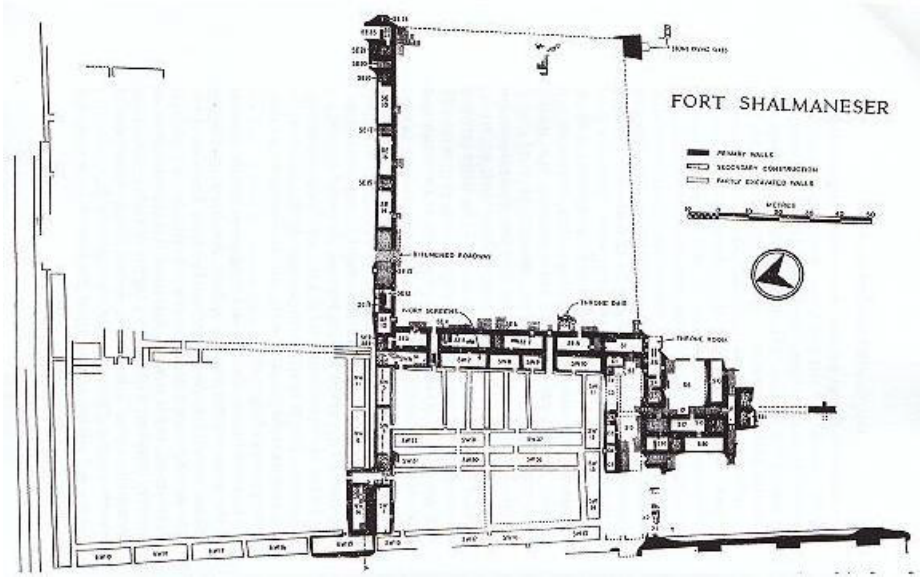
The excavation of this building was begun by Mallowan in 1957, side by side with final investigations on the acropolis at Nimrud. In 1958, the work was concerned exclusively with Shalmaneser's building; after the revolution of July 1958 and the establishment of the Republic of Iraq the situation in the country continued to be disturbed, so that it was considered advisable for the Nimrud Expedition to suspend its activities for the spring of 1959; work was, however, resumed in the spring of 1960.

At the south-eastern corner of Kalah, where the outer city wall changes course from a west-east line and turns north in a right angle, a sudden rise in the ground level marks a grass clad, cone-shaped hill-about 30 yards wide and 110 yards long, with a height of 65 feet—the ruins of a tower at the corner of the fortifications of the outer city. Within this corner of the city-wall there is a rectangular area at a level noticeably higher than that of the fields to the north and west. Even before the beginning of the excavation, this fact seemed to indicate that the site was that of the remains of an ancient building. In the spring of 1957 we found in a ploughed furrow in this area an Assyrian brick stamped with an inscription indicating that the brick belonged to a 'palace erected by Shalmaneser, son of Assurnasirpal, grandson of Tukulti-Ninurta'. All these names could severally refer to more than one Assyrian king; but the genealogical sequence of the inscription showed that it could only refer to Shalmaneser III. This, the first find on the site, therefore made it seem likely that we were standing on top of the ruins of an Assyrian building of the ninth century B.C. It was also likely that it would not be necessary to dig deep to find the walls of the building, if an Iraqi plough without a mould board had been able to bring this brick to the surface; the subsequent excavations showed that at many points the walls reached a height of only eight inches below the ploughland. When one of the Arab foremen of the expedition personnel had been fetched, a man whose lifelong experience in the service of archaeological expeditions had made him a specialist in Assyrian brickwork, he was able after a brief search to point out on the surface the course of some of the walls of the building.

With a small trowel he scraped away the loose earth until the solid earth was revealed, dry and as hard as cement after many rainless weeks. Here a thin white streak, as straight as if traced by a cord, revealed the stucco of an Assyrian wall, made of sun-dried clay bricks, adobe or, in the Arab term for this building material, libn. Mineralogically, this material is of the same substance as the clay that had filled the rooms of the ancient buildings; rain and wind had together caused erosion of the upper parts of the walls, and these had gradually slid down so as eventually to fill courtyards, apartments, and corridors, but this very collapse has preserved the lower parts of the building. The result of this process is a tell, whose level, though not reaching that of the original building, is above that of the surrounding area. New buildings were often raised on the ruins of the old, occasionally with partial use of the plan of the original walls after clearing and levelling; new floors were laid—flagstones or rammed clay floors—and walls were raised to a considerable height. In this way occupation-levels are formed. The more frequently new building takes place, the more occupation-levels there will be, and the higher the tell the appearance of a strip of stucco on the surface immediately raises the elementary question whether the wall is to the right or the left of this strip. In earlier periods of archaeology, instances have occurred of the libn of the wall being mistakenly dug away by the excavator, so that he has merely secured several tons of earth, comprising loose fill that was sealed up behind a carefully excavated stucco strip. Only experience can prevent such a mistake. The clay used for making bricks assumes a light reddish colour after being dried in the sun, whereas the loose clay is greyish. The Arabs take note of the difference by describing libn as 'red' and the earth of the loose infilling trab, as 'black', whereas we recognize the difference only as a very slight variation in colour. An experienced Arab workman can determine with certainty whether a lump of earth picked up at random is part of an Assyrian brick or not.

The tell that represents Shalmaneser III's building in the outer city of Kalah is not particularly high; the excavations showed that secondary building had not occurred to any great extent. The size of the rectangular area covered by the tell, however—220 by 330 yards—indicates that this was a building of considerable extent. The ground plan reproduced in Fig. 4 shows the arrangement of the building as far as it was known by the close of the season in May 1958.

The whole layout, the internal arrangements and the contents of the rooms of this building indicate that it was definitely a military installation, i.e. a garrison building. Therefore, from quite an early stage in the excavations, it was referred to as 'Fort Shalmaneser', and it is under that



name that it now appears in scholarly literature. The fort was heavily defended on all sides. Outwardly, it would be able to defend Kalah against attacks from the south and east along the roads from Erbil (the Assyrian Arbela) and Kirkuk (Arrapha); at the same time it protected a gate in the outer city-wall immediately to the north of its fortifications. The fort was built like a bastion up against the south-eastern corner of the city-wall. The builder had also provided against the possibility of attack from an enemy who had already obtained entrance to the city of Kalah. Along its western side Fort Shalmaneser was protected by a wall almost 330 yards long and 10 feet thick, with guard-towers at a distance of 65 feet from one another. This wall has been excavated for a distance of about 100 yards and can be seen on Plate 7 (a); it was continued to the north for the full length of the fort, and turned to the east until it joined the outer city-wall; thus the garrison was protected by thick walls on all four sides. The course of the walls of the fortification can be followed, even where they have not been uncovered, by a slight rise in the surface of the earth. A few trial excavations along the northern wall of the fortifications have shown signs of a severe fire on the

stucco on the outer side of the wall; as the area immediately in front of the wall had not been built over, this circumstance has been interpreted with a high degree of probability as evidence of an organized attack accompanied by a determined effort to destroy wall and towers.

From the texts found in the building relating to the administration of the fort, it appears that the Assyrians themselves described it as an ekal mdsharti, an expression that can best be rendered as 'arsenal'. Ranged round four large courtyards that divided the fort into four sectors lay barrack-buildings, officers' quarters and magazine rooms. For Shalmaneser III himself and for those of his successors who made use of the fort there was a royal wing, the throne-room of which, decorated with wall paintings, lay in the south-western part of the building. All the residential quarters were provided with a wealth of bathrooms, the efficiency of which was secured by an ingenious drainage system running through the whole building. A stone dais for the royal throne itself was found, not in the throne-room where it had probably been originally situated, but set against the wall at the southern end of the courtyard in the south-eastern wing of the fort; it is

11 (a). Kurdish village. Topzawa, near Dokan.

however quite possible that this was the correct position for the dais, and that parades were held in front of it, so that the king could review his troops

from a throne, certainly protected by an awning set upon it. Access to this open arena was obtained through a gateway from the north-eastern sector of the building. Part of the layout of the gate can be seen on Plate 7 (b), on which wheel-tracks can be distinctly seen in the asphalted roadway in front of the flagstones; it was here that provisions were brought by commissariat vehicles to the royal household and the members of the garrison, and from here the Assyrian war-chariots and heavy baggage-train set out for campaigns against Syria and Palestine, and against the mountain dwellers to north and east. In the magazines jars were found, of the height of a man, for victuals and drink; associated with these containers, texts were found of an administrative character that give an insight into the tasks of the garrison commandant. Thus, entries were found of rations of wine, beer, and bread for the 'princes', 'the people of the court', 'the first lady of the palace', 'the commander of the garrison company of war-chariots', 'the Kassite and Assyrian singers'—brought to the fort to entertain the troops—the Shamash regiment and a whole range of craftsmen as well as governors of distant provinces and foreign diplomats and vassals on a visit to Kalah.

In this heavily fortified building there were also preserved the most precious of the treasures that the Assyrian armies of the time of Shalmaneser III and his successors brought home from their expeditions, as well as precious objects presented to the Assyrian kings as gifts from subject or friendly princes. The finds made during the excavations of the building demonstrate its dual purpose as arsenal and as a treasure-house.

Heaps of armour made of bronze or of iron-plating, some of it designed to be worn by war-horses, were stored in the magazine indicated on the plan as room S-W-7; this tallies with the function of the fort as a military headquarters. Written receipts from the Assyrian quarter-master, rabi ekalli, were found acknowledging the supply, for instance, of 784 bows from the town of Arpad in Syria, or a delivery of shields from Damascus. The metal craft of Damascus must have been even then as much renowned as the Damascus blades of more modern times.

The function of Fort Shalmaneser as a treasure-house leads us on to a later period in the history of Assyria. Inscriptions on the plinth of the throne and on an alabaster plaque in the doorway to the bathroom attached to the throne-room show that the building was established in the 15th year of

Shalmaneser III, i.e. in 844 or 843 B.C., although an administrative text found in a magazine—a receipt for a delivery of wine—is dated 857; work

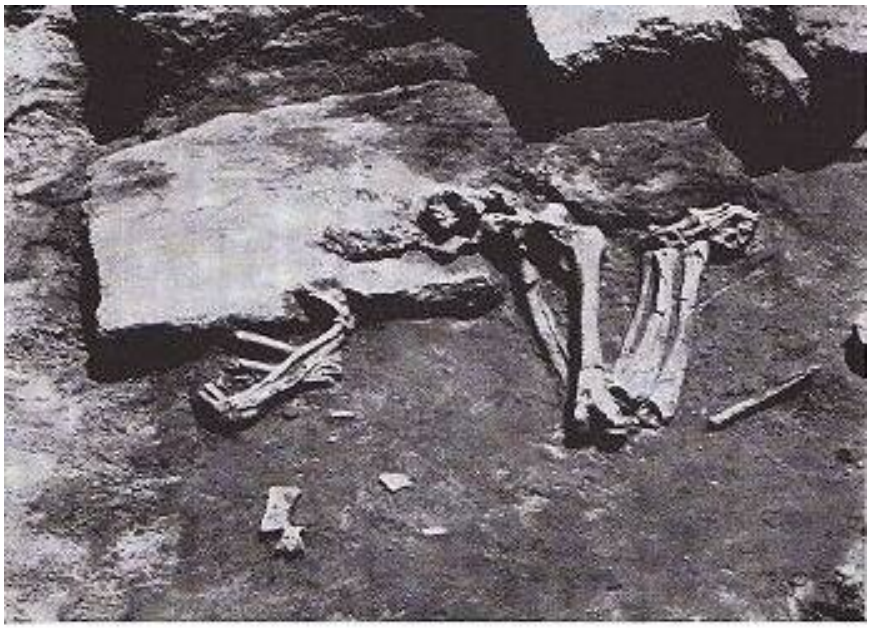
11 (b). Tell Shemshara, May 1957, from the north. To the right, the outline of Tell Bazmusian, about 3 miles away.

on the fort must therefore have been begun shortly after the accession of Shalmaneser in 858 B.C. Till 778 the building was in constant use; dated texts were found belonging to that year. So far, the excavations have revealed no evidence of the use of the fort in the period from 778 to 676; and part of it seems to have fallen into decay as the result of neglect, since in 676 it was necessary for Esarhaddon (680-669) to undertake extensive restorations. The fort was then in use until the fall of Assyria in 612 B.C.

When Esarhaddon came to the throne in 680, a series of rulers had strengthened the Assyrian empire to an extent that made it the unrivalled great power of the time. Tiglath-Pileser III (745-727 B.C.) had conquered Urartu, which had begun to extend its sphere of influence as far as northern Syria; the southern part of this Hurrian mountain kingdom was made into an Assyrian province. To the west he received the allegiance of Rahianu [Rezin] of Damascus, Menahem of Israel, and the Arabian queen Zabibe;

in 731 he took Damascus, and Hanno of Gaza fled before the Assyrian armies into Egypt. Tiglath-Pileser established Assyrian control over Syria and Palestine. To the south, where resistance to Assyria was increasing, he took Babylon in 719, and became the first Assyrian king to ascend the throne of Babylon, although as king of Babylon he selected a different royal name, Pulu. In this, his son, Shalmaneser V (726-722 B.C.) followed his father's example; as king of Babylon, he bore the name of Ulillai. Shalmaneser V responded to an attempted revolt on the part of Hoshea of Israel by laying siege to Samaria. Sargon II (721-705 B.C.) maintained the hold of Assur on Syria and Palestine, Urartu and Babylonia; even Cyprus acknowledged his sway, and he received embassies from the Pharaohs of Egypt and the kings of Ethiopia. Hama in northern Syria was conquered in 720 B.C. He continued his predecessor's campaign against Samaria; his mass-deportations of Israelites—more than 27,000 individuals—and his compulsory transfers of other peoples to replace them put an end to the northern kingdom of Israel. With regard to Babylon, he followed a more reticent policy than his two predecessors, and merely described himself as 'Viceroy of Babylon'. His eighth campaign against Urartu in 714 is better documented than most Assyrian military campaigns, for a most extensive account of it, in the form of a letter to the national god of Assyria that was set down immediately after the conclusion of the campaign, was found in the German excavations of Assur. Sennacherib (704-681 B.C.), his son and successor, who selected Nineveh as his seat of residence, took over an empire stretching from Babylonia and the mountains in the east and north to the coastal lands of the Mediterranean and the borders of Egypt. He describes campaigns against Media, Urartu, and Cilicia; his attack on Jerusalem was, however, fruitless. In the Old Testament, 2 Kings 18-19 and Isaiah 36-37 give an account of these events from the Jewish point of view. When he took Babylon in 689, he exacted frightful revenge for that city's many years of intrigue; he gave it over to the mercy of the Assyrian armies, caused its temples to be relentlessly destroyed, and had the statute of Marduk removed to Assur. In his own country he initiated large-scale engineering works; to assure a supply of water to Nineveh he had the first aqueduct in the history of the world built at Jerwin to carry a canal bringing the waters of the river Gomel from Bawiin to the fields and gardens surrounding the capital. He

introduced the cotton plant into Assyria as well as exotic fruit-trees that had never before grown in that country.

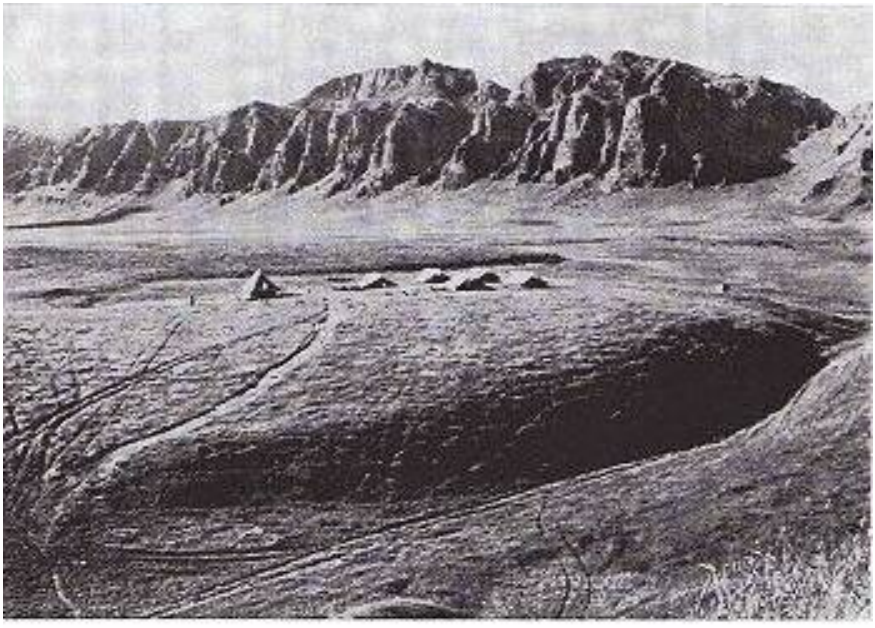


12 (b). Warrior's burial, Kurdistan Bronze Age, excavated at Tell Shemshara, c. 18th century B.C.

On his accession, Esarhaddon (680-669 B.C.) could begin to arm for the attack on Egypt that must have been the final goal of Assyrian imperialism. Excavations of Assyrian cities have shown that in his reign a policy of restoration was begun that embraced several of the country's military installations; thus, at Kalah the gateways of Fort Shalmaneser were re-erected, the north side wall of the fort was strengthened by the building of a retaining wall 16 feet thick, and within the garrison building various improvements and alterations were made in the internal arrangements.

The attack on Egypt was preceded by the suppression of a revolt in southern Babylonia and, in 677, by the conquest of Sidon. A contemporary chronicle states: 'In the seventh year [i.e. 673], on the fifth day of the month Addar, the Assyrian army marched against Egypt.' The long lines of communication, exposed to perpetual attacks from Arab tribes, and the resistance offered by the Pharaoh Taharqa on the frontier of Egypt prevented the enterprise from being crowned with success on this occasion.

Two years later, in 671, the Assyrian armies again appeared on the frontier of Egypt, and this time resistance was broken. Memphis was taken, and the treasure of Egypt carried off to Assyria; 22 Assyrian governors were installed to take charge of the conquered provinces.



12 (a). 'The land of Shusharra': the Dokan Expedition camp at Tell Shemshara, May 1957, from the south-west.

The conquest of all the great cultural regions of the Near East had made Assur, Kalah, and Nineveh the metropolitan centres of a cosmopolitan civilization. Artists and traders from the Mediterranean lands and from Egypt found their way to the great cities of Assyria. The cuneiform texts bear witness to the presence of foreigners in all branches of society; national differences were on the way to being abolished. The art of Egypt, and the Syrian and Phoenician styles that resembled the Egyptian, set the fashion. To Kalah works of art were brought from Egypt and the cities of the Mediterranean as war-booty or as gifts, and Egyptian and Phoenician craftsmen laboured in the workshops of Kalah, where the Assyrians endeavoured to counterfeit their style. It is to the connexions between Assyria and the Mediterranean cities during the eighth and seventh centuries

B.C. that we owe the enormous collection of ivory carvings that came to light at Fort Shalmaneser. This form of art was particularly pleasing to the Assyrian kings; they must have filled their apartments with such carvings, and stocks of raw materials—elephant tusks and blocks of unworked ivory—as well as pieces begun but not completed, show that they introduced this genre to local workshops. Thus more than one style is represented among the thousands of separate pieces or fragments discovered at Fort Shalmaneser; purely Egyptian work, Phoenician and Syrian work in an Egyptizing style, and local products that in part resemble the foreign types and in part represent an attempt to transfer Assyrian artistic tradition to the new medium. Thus there are examples that reveal an obvious attempt to adapt Assyrian relief art to the possibilities of ivory, a monumental art transformed into a Kleinkunst. Plate 8 shows one of the finest of the carved ivories which was found in a corridor of Fort Shalmaneser in the spring of 1958: a winged sphinx with the double crown of Egypt, a pectoral (the aegis), the uraeus-serpent, and, between this and the front legs of the creature, the so-called 'Phoenician apron', a detail that betrays the non-Egyptian origin of such work, though taken all in all the style is definitely Egyptian in its design. The tenons on the top of the curved edge show that this ivory, like most of the others, had been set in a piece of furniture. At the extreme bottom left of the frame there is still attached a piece of the gold foil that was beaten on to the surface of the whole work; when Kalah was taken in 612 B.C., it was the fine metal of these carved pieces that interested the conquerors; they stripped it off and carried it away, while they consigned the ivory to the flames. Most of the ivories in the fort were found to have been blackened by fire and smoke; this particular example chanced to have avoided direct contact with the fire that destroyed the building and was excavated in such a state that it seemed that the artist had put his last touches to it only yesterday.

While the armies of Esarhaddon were attacking and finally conquering Egypt, the mountain peoples were exercising pressure on the eastern and northern frontiers of Assyria. Even under Esarhaddon's predecessors the threat from the Medes, the Scythians, and the Cimmerians had been noticeable. A temporary understanding was reached with the Scythians and was sealed by a marriage between a daughter of Esarhaddon and the Scythian king Bartatua. Assyrian relations with the Median tribes, who were

steadily becoming stronger, are illustrated in a document from Nimrud found in the Nabu temple on the acropolis of Kalah during the excavations of 1955. This text is a cuneiform document of unusual size; it was found in fragments some 100 separate pieces—which it was possible to reassemble as a tablet measuring 18 inches by 11.75 inches—exactly the same dimensions as those of the largest tablet from the library of Assurbanipal at Nineveh. The document can be dated to 672 B.C., and contains the text of a treaty made in that year between Esarhaddon and the Median king Ramataia of the land of Urakazabarna. The inscription on the tablet is arranged in four columns, on front and back, amounting originally to some 700 lines of text, part of which is lost. At the top of the front of the tablet are the impressions of three cylinder seals: one showing the Assyrian king standing between the god Assur and the goddess Ishtar; one showing Adad, god of the storm and rain, standing on the back of a bull, as well as three other figures; and the third, placed between the other two impressions, a smaller one of archaic type showing the god Assur. The inscription at the top of the tablet declares that this is the god's own seal; the treaty is therefore placed under divine protection; Assur will not alter its terms, and he guarantees that they will be observed. From the wording of the text it is clear that its validity is extended even to the period after the death of Esarhaddon, when his son Assurbanipal was to succeed to the Assyrian throne and his brother Shamash-shum-ukin was to inherit that of Babylon. The treaty binds the Medes to have enemies in common with the Assyrians and to co-operate in action against rebels. A series of unusually imaginative curses against the transgressor of the vows made to each other by the contracting parties brings the text to a colourful close. Fragments of other treaty tablets found with those of the Ramataia treaty show that in 672 Esarhaddon entered upon similar mutual agreements with at least six other princes in the mountain areas of the Zagros range and in more distant parts of Iran. The following translation of the treaty between Esarhaddon and Ramataia omits a few sections, for example those that are only preserved in a fragmentary condition.

[Superscription]. The seal of the god Assur, king of the gods, lord of the lands, unalterable; the seal of the great prince, the father of the gods, with whom none can contend.

This is the treaty that Esarhaddon, king of the world, king of Assyria, son of Sennacherib (he who was likewise) king of the world, king of Assyria,

[concludes] with Ramataia, prince of the city of Urakazabarna, with his sons, his grandsons, with all the people of the realm of Urakazabama, young and old, as many as there are: with you all, your sons, your grandsons, who shall be alive in the days that follow the treaty, from sunrise to sunset, as many as they are, over whom Esarhaddon exercises his kingship and sovereignty, he has concluded [this] treaty with you concerning Assurbanipal, the crown prince, the son of Esarhaddon, king of Assyria.

In the presence of the planets Jupiter[22], Venus, Saturn, Mercury, Mars, Sirius, and in the presence of Assur, Anu, Enlil, Ea, Sin, Shamash, Adad, Marduk, Nabu, Nusku, Urash, Nirgal, Ninlil, Sheru'a, Belet-ilani, 'mistress of the gods', Ishtar of Nineveh, Ishtar of Arbela, by all the gods in [the cities of] Assur, Nineveh, Kalah, Arbela, Kakzu, Harran, by all the gods of Assyria, by all gods in Babylon, Borsippa, Nippur, by the gods of Sumer, all of them, by the gods of the lands, all of them; by the gods of heaven and of earth.

[This is] the treaty that Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, has concluded with you in the presence of the great gods of heaven and earth concerning Assurbanipal, the crown prince, son of your lord Esarhaddon, whom he has named and appointed as crown prince. When Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, dies, you will set Assurbanipal, the crown prince, on the royal throne; he will exercise the kingship and sovereignty of Assyria over you. You shall protect him in town and country: you shall fight and die for him. With the truth of your heart shall you talk with him. You shall counsel him with loyal mind. You shall dear a good road for him. [You swear] that you shall not be hostile to him nor set one of his brothers, older or younger, on the throne of Assyria, in his stead; that you shall in no wise alter the word of Esarhaddon, king of Assyria; that you shall only serve Assurbanipal, the crown prince, whom Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, your lord [hereby] . . . ., so that he may exercise kingship and sovereignty over you.

[You swear] that you will protect Assurbanipal, the crown prince, whom Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, has indicated to you and described to you, and on whose behalf he has enjoined this treaty upon you; that you will not

[22] In the translation of the names of the planets, the Latin names have been used instead of those appearing in the Akkadian text. For the names of planets and stars, Babylonian and Assyrian astronomers mainly employed Sumerian symbols, the Akkadian reading of which is not always known.

transgress against him; that you will not lift a hand against him for evil intent; that you will not rise against him or undertake anything against him that is not good and seemly; that you will not drive him from the kingdom of Assyria by helping one of his brothers older or younger to seize the throne of Assyria in his stead; that you will not set another king or lord over you; that you will not swear any oath to any (other) king or lord.

[You swear] that you will neither listen to nor conceal any unseemly, evil, or false word concerning the exercise of the kingdom, a word that is unseemly and evil towards Assurbanipal, the crown prince, either from his brothers, his uncles, his cousins from his family on his father's side, or from officials and governors, or a soldier, or a courtier, or from any specially qualified person or from ordinary people, as many as there may be, [but that] you will come and report [such matters] to Assurbanipal the crown prince. [You swear] that should Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, die while his sons are minors, you will help Assurbanipal the crown prince to take over the throne of Assyria and help Shamash-shum-ukin, his own full brother, the crown prince of Babylon, to the throne of Babylon; that you will make over to him all Sumer, Akkad, and Karduniash. Every gift that Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, his father, gave to him will he take with him. You will not retain so much as one.

[You swear] that with regard to Assurbanipal, the crown prince, whom Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, has indicated to you and (with regard) to his brothers, sons of the same mother as Assurbanipal, the crown prince, on whose behalf Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, has concluded this treaty with you, you will observe complete justice; that you will always answer him in truthful and seemly wise; that you will speak to him with truth in your heart; that you will protect them [i.e. the crown prince and his brothers] in town and country.

[You swear] that you will neither injure Assurbanipal the crown prince whom Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, has described to you, nor his brothers, sons of the same mother as Assurbanipal, the crown prince, on whose behalf he has concluded this treaty with you; that you will not lift your hands in evil against them; that you will not instigate revolt or undertake aught that is evil; .... ; that you will not seize him or deliver him up; that you will not

yield him to his enemies; that you will not drive him from the kingdom in Assyria; that you will not bind yourselves by oath to any other king or lord.

[You swear] that if any person should speak to you of revolt or insubordination or homicide in respect of Assurbanipal, the crown prince, son of Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, who has concluded the treaty with you on his behalf—(that which would lead to) your own misfortune and destruction—you will not listen thereto from any man. [You swear that on the contrary you] will seize the instigators of revolt and bring them before Assurbanipal, the crown prince; that you, in so far as you are in a position to seize them and slay them, will so seize and slay, and that you will eradicate their name and their successors in the land. If you should be unable to seize them and slay them, you will reveal this to Assurbanipal, the crown prince. You will stand at his side, and you will (together with him) seize the instigators of revolt and slay them.

[You swear] that you will not make common cause with the instigators of revolt, whether they be few or many; that you will listen to naught, be it advantageous or disadvantageous, without informing Assurbanipal, the crown prince, son of Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, by repairing to him and (thus) being entirely on his side; that you .... will conclude no treaty, that during a meal at a table, in drinking from a goblet, in lighting a fire, in laying hold of a [woman's] breast, you will not become attached to one another, but will repair to Assurbanipal, the crown prince, son of Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, and inform him; that you will seize and slay the instigators of revolt and the troops of the traitor; that you will eradicate their name and their successors in the land.

[You swear] that should an Assyrian or an Assyrian vassal or an official or a courtier or an Assyrian citizen or citizens of any other land whatsoever or persons of any description whatsoever conceive hatred towards Assurbanipal, the crown prince, in country or town, and instigate revolt and insubordination, you will stand beside Assurbanipal, the crown prince, and protect him; that you will wholeheartedly slay those soldiers that instigate revolt (or) hand them over to Assurbanipal, the crown prince, and his brothers of the same mother.

[You swear] that if anyone should break with Assurbanipal the crown prince, son of Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, your lord, on whose behalf he

has concluded the treaty with you, you will not make common cause with him; that (on the contrary), if he should vanquish you by force, you will flee and come to Assurbanipal the crown prince.

[You swear] that on the day that Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, your lord, dies, Assurbanipal the crown prince, son of Esarhaddon, shall become your king, your lord; that he then can suppress the strong and exalt the weak, that he can cause him that deserves death to suffer death and show mercy to him that deserves mercy; that you will then listen to all that he says and perform all that he commands; and that you will seek no other king or lord apart from him.

[You swear] that, if Esarhaddon, king of Assyria should die while his sons are still minors, and an official or a courtier should slay Assurbanipal, the crown prince, and take over the kingdom in Assyria, you will not make common cause with him, or become his servants, but break with him and become (his) enemies; that you will seize him and slay him and thereupon cause a son of Assurbanipal, the crown prince, to assume the throne of Assyria.

[You swear] that (if necessary) you will await (the time of delivery of) the woman that may be pregnant by Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, or (the delivery of) the wife of Assurbanipal, the crown prince; that, after (the son) is born, you will rear him and set him upon the throne of Assyria; that you will seize and slay the instigators of revolt; that you will exterminate their name and their lineage in the land; that, shedding blood for blood, you will avenge Assurbanipal, the crown prince; [and you swear] that you will not give Assurbanipal, the crown prince, son of Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, your lord, any deadly herb to eat, or give him [poison] to drink, or anoint him with a [poisonous] plant; that you will not work magic against him nor call down the wrath of gods or goddesses upon him.

As to the terms of this treaty which Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, has confirmed with you regarding Assurbanipal, the crown prince, and his brothers, sons of the same mother as Assurbanipal, the crown prince, he has (at the same time) caused you to swear an oath that you will report (on) the terms of this treaty to your sons and your grandsons, your successors, the successors of your successors that shall be born in time to come, and that you will charge them 120 with this message: 'Maintain this treaty. Do not

transgress against your treaty obligations, or else you shall lose your lives, your land you shall give up to destruction, your people shall be carried away as prize of war. Let this thing, that is fitting for gods and men, be also agreeable to you. Let it be binding on you for ever.' Let Assurbanipal, the crown prince, be preserved so that he may become ruler over land and people; let him come to be named for the taking over of the kingdom. You shall not set any other king or lord over you.

[You swear] that you will not alter (this treaty), that you will not consign it to the fire or cast it into the water, that you will not bury it, or destroy it in any deliberate manner, or cause it to disappear, or sweep it aside.

[If you do so], let Assur, king of the gods, who determines the fates, determine evil and not good as your fate. Let him never confer fatherhood upon you or (allow you to reach) a ripe old age.

Let Ninlil, his beloved consort, interpret his utterances in evil wise; let her not intervene on your behalf.

Let Sin, who illumines heaven and earth, invest you with leprosy; let him withhold from you access to gods and kings, saying 'Range the steppe even as do the wild ass and the gazelle'.

Let Shamash, light of heaven and earth, not judge you righteously; let him deprive you of visual strength so that you wander in obscurity.

Let Ninurta, first among the gods, strike you down with his swift arrow; let him fill the steppe with your bodies; let him give your flesh as meat to eagle and jackal.

Let Venus, most brilliant among the stars, cause your wives to lie in the bosom of your enemies before your eyes; let your sons not inherit your house; let an enemy stranger partake of your property.

Let Adad, who has care of the waters of heaven and earth, cause your meadow tracts to lack vegetation; let him (inundate) your land with a flood; let the locust, despoiler of the land, consume your harvest; let there be no noise from millstone or oven in your houses, let no corn be stored up for grinding; in place of corn let your knuckle bones and those of your sons and daughters be ground; let an enemy eat the dough from your troughs; let food be lacking to you; let a mother bolt her door in the face of her daughter;

let you yourselves in your need eat the flesh of your sons; [....]; from hunger let one man eat another's flesh; let one man clothe himself in the other's skin; let dogs and swine eat your flesh; let your spirit have none to pour out libations before it.

Let Ishtar, mistress of war and battle, break your bow in bitter fighting, let her bind fast your arm, let her make you sit before your enemy's feet.

Let Nergal, hero among the gods, extinguish your life with his merciless dagger, let him send slaughter and deadly sickness upon you.

Let Ninlil, who dwells in Nineveh, bind a flaming sword to your side.

Let these gods take heed that we [swear] not to instigate revolt or rebellion against Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, or against Assurbanipal, the crown prince, or against his brothers, sons of the same mother as Assurbanipal, the crown prince, or against the rest of the issue of Esarhaddon; nor to make common cause with his enemies, nor to be ready to listen to, nor to keep concealed, incitement to assassination, [nor to be ready to listen to] those who spread rumours about anything evil or unseemly, [in expressing] treacherous or disloyal designs against Assurbanipal, the crown prince, and his brothers of the same mother as Assurbanipal, the crown prince, our lord. As long as we, our sons and our grandsons are alive, shall Assurbanipal the crown prince assuredly be our king and our lord. [We swear] that we will not set any other king or prince over us, our sons or our grandsons. (If we do so), then may the gods, as many as are here named by name, take vengeance on us, our successors, and the successors of our successors, at our own hands.

Should you transgress the terms of the treaty that Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, your lord, has concluded with you concerning Assurbanipal, the crown prince, and concerning his brothers, sons of the same mother as Assurbanipal, the crown prince, and the rest of the issue of Esarhaddon your lord, then let Assur the father of the gods smite you with his weapons.

Let Ea, king of the depths of fresh water, lord of the springs, give you foul water to drink, may he fill you with dropsy.

Just as rain does not fall from a brazen heaven, even so let rain and dew not come upon your fields and meadows; let it rain burning coals instead of dew over your land.

Just as lead withstands not a fire, even so let you not be able to withstand your enemies; you shall take your sons and daughters by the hand and flee.

Just as the seed of a hinny is sterile, even so let your name, your seed, and your son's seed as well as your daughters be expunged from the land.

Just as a snake and a mongoose do not go in together and lie in the same hole without bethinking themselves of cutting off each other's life, even so let you and your womenfolk not enter the same room without thinking of cutting off each other's life.

Just as a butterfly that leaves its pupa does not return to its pupa, even so let you not turn again to the womenfolk in your houses. Just as a bird is caught in a trap, even so let your brothers and sons deliver you over to the hand of your slayer.

Just as a wax figure is burnt in fire and as a clay figure is dissolved in water, even so may your form burn in the fire and sink down into the water.

You swear that you will not abandon your loyalty to Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, and Assurbanipal, the crown prince; that you will not turn aside either to right or left. Let scorpions devour him who goes to the right; let scorpions devour him who goes to the left.

As the interior of a hole is empty, so let your inwards be empty. . . The sixteenth day of the month Ajjar, in the year in which Nabu-bel-usur, governor at Dar-Sharrukin [Khorsabad] occupied the limmu-office [i.e., 672 B.C.]. The treaty concerning Assurbanipal, crown prince of Assyria, and Shamash-shum-ukin, crown prince of Babylon.

The succession to the throne was assured despite intrigues at the Assyrian court that can be deduced from the wording of Esarhaddon's treaty with Ramataia the Mede. Assurbanipal ascended the throne in Assyria; his elder brother, Shamash-shum-ukin, inherited the throne of Babylon in the now divided kingdom. In Nineveh, Assurbanipal built up the library that has been the particular cause of his renown; he had his palace adorned with reliefs which, not least by their realistic representations of the royal lion-hunt, have a firm place in the world's history of art, as the most outstanding examples of the relief-work of the neo-Assyrian empire. Domination over Egypt was maintained for a time, though Thebes was conquered. In the words of the prophet Nahum, Egypt was 'carried away, she went into

captivity; her young children also were dashed in pieces at the top of all the streets; and they cast lots for all her honourable men, and all her great men were bound in chains'. (Nahum 3.10.) Two Egyptian obelisks were taken to Nineveh; three Egyptian statutes—two representing the Pharaoh Taharga—found during excavations at Nineveh in 1954 are presumably associated with this campaign. However, the hold of Assyria on this distant province, where resistance could be organized from Upper Egypt, was soon loosened; in 655 Egypt regained her independence under Psammetichus. In the Mesopotamian homeland, civil war broke out, in which Shamash-shum-ukin of Babylon was associated in opposition to his brother with numerous provinces of the empire and neighbouring states such as Elam. From 652 to 648 Babylon was under continuous siege; when the city eventually fell, Shamash-shum-ukin sought death in the flames that engulfed his palace. An Assyrian punitive expedition against Elam led in 639 to the capture of its capital Susa and to the partial destruction of the city. By the end of Assurbanipal's reign the collapse of Assyria was imminent. Three kings who succeeded him in the years 631 to 612 were incapable of resisting the revolt that was now spreading against the power of Assyria. Nabopolassar rallied Babylonia and in 626 founded the neo-Babylonian dynasty. The Medes no longer considered themselves bound by their treaty with Esarhaddon; on the contrary, they felt it to be an unprecedented affront and disgrace. Kalah was fortified in the period following Assurbanipal; Fort Shalmaneser was further strengthened and its inner chambers were turned into store-rooms, in which were placed the treasures the Assyrian kings had collected over a period of more than two centuries. In 614 the Mede Kyaxares took Assur, the southern Assyrian capital. Two years later the Babylonian and Median armies attacked Kalah and Nineveh. The Babylonian chroniclers are silent about the capture of Kalah; is this due to the fact that it was given up to the Median armies? Spearheads of a foreign type, found at Fort Shalmaneser, provide evidence of the fighting around the walls. The floor of the central store-room in the garrison building (shown as S.10 on the ground plan in Fig. 4), when excavated, was found to be covered with a layer of ashes 6 feet thick; this indicates the extent of the fire that raged through the fort. In these ashes lay hundreds of broken and blackened pieces of the Assyrian kings' collection of gold-plated ivories. Obvious violence had been used in the destruction of the treaty with Ramataia and the copies of the other

treaties concluded by Esarhaddon with Median princes sixty years earlier; they were all smashed into hundreds of fragments. Is it possible that this fact betokens the long-awaited vengeance of the Medes on this city which contained the most disgraceful documents in their history?

Following the destruction of the Assyrian capitals, an Assyrian prince, who like the founder of the Middle Assyrian kingdom bore the name Assur-uballit, attempted with Egyptian help to establish an Assyrian garrison at Harran, far to the west in Syria. In 608 he was forced to yield to a new Babylonian-Median attack; two years later he was irretrievably defeated. Assyrian power was thus finally broken.

Assyrians and Hurrians in the Zagros

THE expansion of Assyria to the west is well documented. The texts of Assyrian royal annals and of rock-inscriptions in areas of Iraq, Turkey, Syria, and the Lebanon, provide incontestable evidence for it. Excavations at Mari, Shaghir Bazar, Til Barsib on the upper Euphrates, Carchemish, Alalah, Ugarit, Hama, and numerous other ancient city sites along the eastern shores of the Mediterranean have confirmed the statements in the texts.

It is quite different with the expansion of Assyria towards the east. Excavations have taken place in the eastern Tigris valley and north-east of Mosul; Sargon II's residential capital has been revealed at Khorsabad (Dur-Sharrukin); south of the Little Zab, Yorghan Tepe (Nazi) has proved to have been an important Hurrian area at the time of the kingdom of Mittanni. On some sites in the region of Mosul various expeditions have investigated remains of the Middle and neo-Assyrian periods. Archaeological work east of the Tigris has, however, not been in keeping with the importance that should be attached to the eastern provinces according to the Assyrian texts. Where archaeologists have been active in these areas, their excavations have mainly revealed sites of prehistoric occupation. Thus, paleolithic settlements have been revealed at Shanidar, north-west of Rowanduz, where Neanderthal-type skeletons have been found by American anthropologists. At Zarzi, south of the village of Dokan on the Little Zab, there is evidence of paleolithic cave dwellers. At Barda, Balka and Jarmo, on the road from Kirkuk to Sulaimaniya, an American expedition has found neolithic village communities. Further archaeological investigation of the area between the heartland of Assyria on the Tigris and the Iraqi-Iranian frontier has long been desirable, since so far there has been no evidence of the prehistoric connexions between the early cultures of Mesopotamia and the cultures of the Iranian plateau, although pottery types in Mesopotamia and in Persia show that such connexions must have existed.

As to the historic periods, the review in Chapters II and III has left a number of questions open and problems unsolved. We know very little about the Gutians who, starting from the Zagros mountains, attacked the Akkad dynasty under its later rulers. In the land of Lullubum, south of

Sulaimaniya, Naram-Sin of Akkad had a rock-carving executed in relief as a symbol of his victories in this area; but the history and internal conditions of the land itself have not been elucidated by excavations at Shehrizor. From the year-formulas used by kings of the Third Dynasty of Ur for their dates, it can be seen that the Sumerians also attempted at the end of the third millennium to bring the land of Lullubum and adjacent areas under their sway; Shulgi, the second king of the dynasty, claims Sumerian victories over Lullubum in his 26th, 45th, and 46th regnal years in connexion with expeditions against Urbillum and Shashrum. Urbillum is the oldest name of the city later called by the Assyrians Arbela, the modern Erbil. Shashrum has not yet been identified, but, like the other places of this context, must be sought east of the Tigris[23]. The enormous tell that represents ancient Arbela cannot be excavated because of the presence of later Islamic buildings at its summit; archaeologists will only be able to reveal earlier occupation levels in this city, whose history goes back to the third millennium B.C., if houses in the oldest quarter of modern Erbil are ever cleared away.

The Mari letters shed a sidelight on the wars of Shamshi-Adad I and Ishme-Dagan in the eastern provinces of Assyria. Their most redoubtable opponents were armies from the land or tribe of Turukkum. Letters to Jasmah-Adad at Mari mention other eastern tribes under the designations of Qutii and Lullu, names that it is possible to recognize as variants of Gutium and Lullubum[24]. Zimrilim of Mari was obliged to fight against the mountain peoples of the eastern part of his kingdom during the latter part of his reign. While Shamshi-Adad was still alive, Hammurabi of Babylon had become interested in Turukkaean affairs; he negotiated with Shamshi-Adad for the handing over of a man of the Turukku tribe, a political refugee

[23] It is probable that Shashrum is identical with the city called Shusharra in the Mari period. Excavations undertaken in 1959 by the Iraq Directorate of Antiquities on the Rania plain produced evidence of Sumerian influence here at the time of the Third Dynasty of Ur, administrative texts having been found which were famished with the seal of Ibbi-Sin.

[24] Gutium and Lullubum are the terms used at the time of the Akkad dynasty. The writing system was not at that time sufficiently specialized to make it possible to distinguish clearly between the syllables qu and gu in writing. The form Quth, 'Qutaeans', can be recognized orthographically and linguistically as a later form of the Old Akkadian Gutiu(m). Lullubum is assumed to be the term used by the indigenous population for the land in which the Lullti tribe, 'Lullaeans', lived; in later Assyrian texts, a form Lullumiu also appears as a term for the inhabitants of this land.

with a Hurrian name. In the 37th year of his reign, Hammurabi reports a victory over armies from Turukkum, Kakmum, and the land of Subartu. The Mari letters showed that the Turukkaeans were under the command of Hurrian army leaders, and have given us an impression of the difficulties involved in maintaining the eastern provinces, such as the land of Shusharra, under Assyrian domination; but the location of places such as Shusharra and Qabra and the other eastern lands and towns that had a part to play in the Mari period could not be determined merely on the basis of the written material from Mari.

The period of the Mittanni kingdom could be documented quite comprehensively, but we are not so well informed of its antecedents—the conditions of Hurrian life in the Zagros mountains, from which their expansion stemmed. The founders of the Middle Assyrian empire mention in their annals that Assyrian armies marched into the mountain regions, and these regions can be identified from general indications in the texts as being the areas around the fertile Shehrizor plain. Even at this time, the Turukkaeans appear as opponents of Assyrian colonization. But it would be necessary to institute controlled excavations in these areas in order to achieve exact identification of the many places mentioned in the texts. The German scholar A. Billerbeck, who travelled in the country to the east of the Tigris at the close of the nineteenth century, collected a great amount of topographical material which he published in his book Das Sandschak Suleimania and dessen persische Nachbarland schaften Zur babylonischen and assyrischen Zeit (1898). This represented a first attempt to co-ordinate in a systematic manner the references in the Assyrian texts with geographical information obtained by practical experience. In 1927 the American scholar E. A. Speiser travelled through the region of Sulaimaniya and undertook a few trial excavations of the ruin-mounds on the Shehrizor plain, but the most important results of his journey of discovery were based on topographical observations. In the report of his travels, Southern Kurdistan in the Annals of Ashurnasirpal and Today (1928), he made valuable additions to the information supplied by Billerbeck and presented convincing arguments in support of the view that the Bazian pass on the road from Kirkuk to Sulaimaniya must be identical with the pass that the Assyrians called Babite, through which their armies marched when they launched campaigns against Zamua. Speiser's travels did not take him north

of Sulaimaniya, and neither his reports nor those of Billerbeck shed much light on the topography of the Dokan-Rania area.

In the eighth year of his reign (714 B.C.) Sargon II of Assyria undertook an expedition against Urartu (cf. p. 63). The line of march of the Assyrian

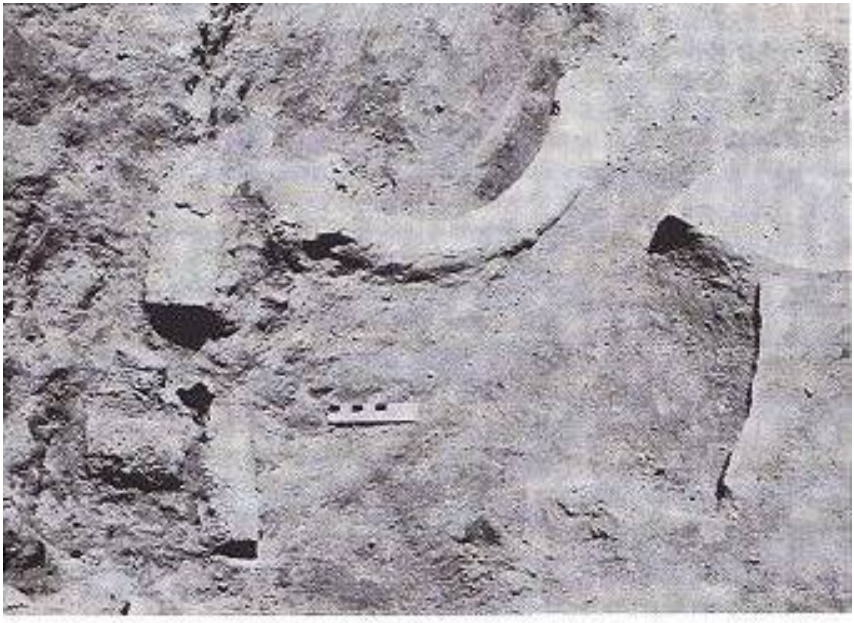
13 (a). Tell Shemshara after excavation, August 1957

army is described in detail in a text that was set down immediately after the conclusion of the campaign; the text was published by the French scholar F. Thureau-Dangin in his work Une Relation de la huitieme campagne de Sargon (1912). The text itself makes it clear that the army marched eastwards from Kalah (Nimrud), crossed the Little Zab, and pushed on into the Zagros mountains, where Sargon mentions contact with the land of Kakmum, which Hammurabi had conquered in the 37th year of his reign. In the Zagros, the army turned north, reached Lake Van, marched north of this lake, probably also north of Lake Urmia, ravaged Musasir, and from there returned to its starting-point. In the course of his account of the first part of the campaign, Sargon writes:

The Little Zab, which can only be crossed with difficulty, I caused the armies of the gods Shamash and Marduk to pass over as though it had been a ditch; I penetrated the passes in the Kullar mountain, a steep mountain

range in the land of the Lullumu people [See Footnote 24], which they themselves [i.e. the population of the land] call Zamua.

Both Billerbeck and Speiser with good reason considered that the Kullar mountain is a range that stretches in a northwest southeast direction between Dokan and Sulaimaniya and is now known by the name of Kolara undoubtedly a modem form of the ancient name; it is by no means unusual for the ancient names of towns and districts to live on in a form that is more or less transparent (e.g. Arbela, corresponding to the modern name Erbil; Babili [Babylon], now Babil; Nippur, now Nuffar; etc.). It is more difficult to state precisely where Sargon led his army into the higher Zagros ranges east of Sulaimaniya. Thureau-Dangin considered that a troop review, described in the ensuing section of the text, took place on the Shehrizor plain. E. M. Wright, an American with intimate knowledge of the topography of southern Kurdistan, has suggested that Sargon did not proceed as far as the Sulaimaniya district, but followed the course of the



13 (b). Cuneiform tablets during the excavation of the archive-room at Tell Shemshara, 2nd August 1957. (Scale indicates 5 centimeters)

Little Zab northwards and reviewed his troops on the plain south of Rania,

and from here he could have led his armies through the gorge at Darband-i-Ramkan, past a town near the modern Qal'a Dizeh, where there is a tell of imposing dimensions, and thence to the north-east[25].

14 (a). Detail of Assurnasirpal's standard inscription. from Nimrud. (Height of the individual symbols about .75 inches).

The discovery of the treaty of Esarhaddon with Ramataia has brought the relationship of Assyria with the advancing Medes into the purview of the centuries-old interaction between Mesopotamia and the mountain peoples; but here too our knowledge of the conditions of the mountain-dwellers themselves must depend on archaeological investigation on the sites where these people actually lived, and in particular on possible finds of written material. Such finds would give us direct evidence about matters for which so far we have been almost exclusively dependent on the one-sided statements in Assyrian inscriptions. It must therefore be of the highest importance to seek to have excavations carried out in those areas east of the Tigris near the mountains where so many problems remain unsolved.

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[25] Wright's contribution to the discussion appeared in his paper 'The Eighth Campaign of Sargon II of Assyria' in the journal of Near Eastern Studies, Vol 2 [1943], pp. 173-186.

The possibility of organizing such an excavation seemed to present itself in 1956. At that time, the construction of a dam near the village of Dokan was nearing completion. The dam was being built for the Iraq Government; its purpose was to transform part of the Little Zab north of Dokan into a reservoir that would help to ensure a water supply all the year round to irrigate the districts along the southern reaches of the river where rainfall is scanty. At the same time, the force of the water was to be used for an electric power station beside the dam; controls were to be installed so that the dam could contribute to the protection of areas along the Zab and Tigris against the floods that could be caused by a sudden rise in the level of the water in the rivers. Behind the 321-foot-high dam, an area of some 88 square miles was to be turned into a lake about 171 miles long by 15 miles wide. At the time, it was expected that construction work on the dam would be finished in the autumn of 1957.

The region thus to be lost to archaeological research was the Dasht-i-Bitwain plain south of the town of Rania. Sayyid Sabri Shukri, an official in the service of the Iraq Department of Antiquities, had submitted a report some years earlier showing that there were at least 40 tells on this plain. At the time, none of these ancient sites had been submitted to archaeological investigation. Iraqi archaeologists themselves planned preliminary work for the spring of 1956, but were too few to be able to undertake the excavation of all the mounds.

I became aware of these facts during a stay in Iraq in the spring of 1956. I had seen photographs of every single tell in Dasht-i-Bitwain; the Iraqi archaeologists had provided me with a map of the plain and acquainted me with some of the conditions attending work on the spot. The plain had the reputation of being extraordinarily fertile, but the many artificially-irrigated fields were the breeding-ground for millions of mosquitoes, and the place was regarded as one of the worst regions for malaria in the whole of Iraq. A mosquito-net was absolutely essential. The ground was infested with scorpions and swarmed with poisonous snakes. The heat of the summer was appalling. The plain was swept by storms that were liable to last for days or even weeks and raised the black dust from the dried-out branches of the river bed; it was only in the spring that the Zab flowed as a great stream through the plain and prevented the storms raising the dust. The storms had the infamous name of 'black wind', rosha bah, as the Kurds of the plain

called this affliction. The country was said to be exceptionally difficult, such roads as existed being among the worst to be found in Iraq. The plain was intersected by wadis that made transport even by jeep or Land-Rover perilous and often impossible.

14 (b). Cuneiform tablets during excavation and temporary conservation in the archive-room of Tell Shemshara)

In the summer of 1956, I worked out a plan for Danish archaeological investigations north of Dokan. These were based on the assumption that the Rania plain, being on the through route between Iran and Iraq, could be expected to provide evidence of connexions between these two culture-areas in prehistoric times; moreover, written material from various periods of Assyrian history made it likely that the area had been a goal for Assyrian expansion towards the east. Added to this were the facts that no archaeologist had hitherto worked on the plain, and that the forthcoming transformation of the plain into a reservoir made the excavation of one of its larger tells a task of particular importance, since it would soon be impossible to gather any information that the Rania plain had to offer on the earlier history of Kurdistan. Grants from the Carlsberg Foundation, the Danish Government Foundation for the Promotion of Research, and from

the Rask-Orsted Foundation enabled these plans to be carried out. An expedition was formed under the leadership of Professor Harald Ingholt, the archaeologist. It also included two architects, Mogens and Anne Tinne Friis, and an archaeological assistant, Flemming Sidenius Johansen. My function was to act as the expedition photographer, to deal with any inscriptions that might come to light, to pay the workmen, and generally to undertake the tasks that usually fall to the lot of the deputy field director of an archaeological expedition.

Since, on account of the winter rains, the areas around Rania were inaccessible until May, and the Dokan dam was expected to be completed by the autumn of 1957, it was necessary for the expedition to carry out its work on the plain during the summer months of that year. In March and April we participated in the excavations at Nimrud, and then moved camp to Kurdistan; tents and a quantity of other equipment were lent to us by the British Nimrud Expedition.

Before work could be begun on the Rania plain, it had naturally been necessary to make all manner of preparations. We had brought photographic apparatus and light surveying instruments from Denmark. What could be procured in Baghdad was so procured; equipment ranging in size from an oil stove to paper and note books. At the end of March, I made the acquaintance of an Armenian in Baghdad who had a second-hand Land Rover for sale. After a thorough inspection, this was bought by the expedition, and at 4 a.m. on 29 March, I left Baghdad to drive it to Nimrud. At that time, the road from Baghdad to Mosul and Nimrud ran via Kirkuk; since then, the road along the west bank of the Tigris via Tekrit, Samarra, and Shirgat has been brought into such a state that it is now possible to use this much shorter route between Baghdad and Mosul. From Baghdad to Kirkuk, I had the company of an Iraqi mechanic, Kerim, who was familiar with the roads between the towns of Diltawa and Tiuz Khurmatli. The roads consist of a desert track that is constantly shifting; every winter, cloudbursts carve out new wadis, so that the lorries that convey the bulk of the traffic between Baghdad and Kirkuk have to find new crossing-points.

We reached the date-groves around Diltawa after a drive of two hours and then we were alone with the desert. The early morning light was like silver, above an endless yellow-brown plain. At one single point we passed a

Bedouin camp, three black tents surrounded by a herd of camels. After that, the desert was empty as far as the eye could reach; only a few camel thorn bushes broke the oppressive loneliness. We drove northwards with half a mile of dust-cloud behind us; the vehicle was like a travelling smoke-canister, and we were covered beyond recognition with a layer of dust like fine powder, which penetrated every nook and cranny of the Land-Rover. I knew that the desert would be like this, for I had experienced dust-storms in Baghdad, when the wind brought clouds of dust over the city so that the sun was obscured—days when cars had to travel with their lights on, when the opposite side of the street could only be discerned through a veil of dust that seemed to hang in the air, when the Tigris was covered with a grey-brown film, and every movement sent clouds of dust into the air; the atmosphere over Baghdad consisted of columns of dust, miles high; the daylight was brown and threatening. No wonder that the Babylonians took this phenomenon as a warning of disaster to come and conjured up a picture of the underworld as a place where the dead lived as shadows, where their food was dust and clay their nutriment, where they were denied light and dust covered door and bolt.

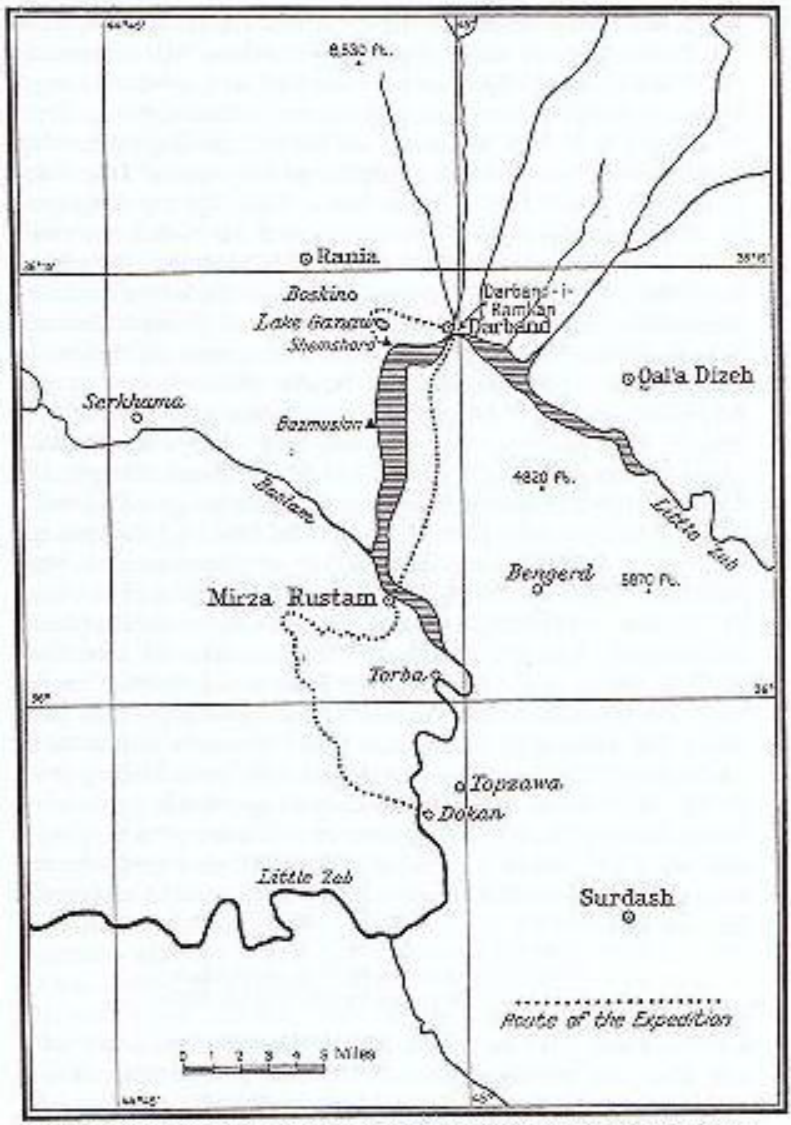
To the east the low hills behind Khanaqin began to appear on the horizon. Behind us lay the river Diyala with the ancient kingdom of Eshnunna. Between Tixz Khurmatli and Tauq the road ran between the low rocks of the foothills. Kerim had heard that there was a better road further up in the hills around Tauq. We put the vehicle into four-wheel drive and made upwards along some wheel-tracks towards the crest of a hill. Just on the other side of the summit we came to a halt. Where the road had once gone on, there was now only a steep drop. A raging torrent along a wadi had cut away the whole of the hillside; after this landslide there was, as Kerim very rightly remarked, no more road. The rocks on either side prevented us turning the vehicle, and so we had to back our way down. This was when I realized that the hand-brake would have to be tightened as soon as possible! It was indeed a useful trial trip for the expedition's Land-Rover; the road from Baghdad to Kirkuk was like a motorway compared with the country we should later have to inflict on it in the mountains north of Dokan. About three in the afternoon we reached Kirkuk, where I took leave of Kerim and set off alone on the comparatively much better road via Altin Koprii, where a bridge crosses the Little Zab, to Erbil and Mosul. I was now in familiar

country; from Erbil to Mosul, I had an Iraqi Air Force sergeant as my passenger—a man I had met a year before in Mosul and encountered again by chance on the road out of Erbil—and when we stopped in the village of Eski Kelek on the Great Zab for tea, we were entertained in the chaikhdna by a policeman who had previously worked at Nimrud and who greeted me as a long-lost brother. As a parting gift, he presented me with a goat's cheese. At ten p.m. I saw the lights of Nebi Yunus, the great tell that contains part of the ruins of Nineveh and on which some of the city of Mosul is built. An hour later I turned off the main road to follow the track across the fields to Nimrud; to reassure myself that I had chosen the right track, I switched off the lights and got out of the Land-Rover to take my bearings from the contours of the landscape. Just then the engine unaccountably stalled. The place was the right one, and I was now only five miles from Nimrud. From the village of Tell Agixb, half a mile away on the track towards my destination, I heard a cacophony of barking and howling dogs, such as occurs in every Arab village at night; by day they are peaceable and only move round lazily with the shadows so as to continue sleeping out of the heat of the sun, but the night makes them wild and dangerous; we had treated quite enough Arabs who had come to Nimrud with frightful dog bites for me to have no wish to make the closer acquaintance of the dogs of Tell Aqub. I spent an hour trying to get the engine started again, but eventually had to give up; I realized at last that the dynamo would have to be replaced. I rejected the idea of spending that night in the vehicle, filled as it was with most of the equipment the Dokan expedition had obtained in Baghdad; it was better to leave it unattended for the night and come back to it at dawn the next day than to abandon it for a few hours after sunrise, for this would be an invitation to anyone who chanced to pass by and would quickly discover that no locks were fitted on Land-Rovers of that vintage. The really irreplaceable objects I had brought with me, heavy enough as they were, I put on my shoulders and set off; a 'searchlight' torch of Danish manufacture formed a useful part of the equipment. A little way outside Tell Aqub the dogs got wind of me and all hell broke loose. Human life in the village seemed to be extinct; it appeared to be inhabited by a pack of animals, whose close kinship to wolves was only too apparent. Green eyes and bared teeth shone in the light of the torch, as the dogs prepared to spring; but the heavy torch and the stones on the soil of Assyria were not

bad weapons, and half a mile beyond Tell Aqub the dogs lost interest in me and returned to their own domain. About midnight I saw at last with greater joy than ever before the dark contour of the Zikkurat of Nimrud standing out in the night landscape; Ali the watchman who heard me coming bade me welcome with many salams, put down his rifle and relieved me of my burden. I found my tent and drank a quart of water. The next morning we towed the sorry Land-Rover into Mosul, where its faults were put right. It served us well for the whole time of the Dokan expedition and in August 1957 was sold once more to a Kurdish merchant in Rania, where it is presumably still to be found.

On 6 May we left Nimrud, accompanied by a lorry with the expedition's camping equipment, and spent the night at Kirkuk. The following day we travelled about 95 miles from Kirkuk through the Bazian pass—the Assyrian Babite—to Dokan, where we set up temporary headquarters. On 10 May we paid our first visit to the Rania plain and got as far as Mirza Rustam. Here cars are normally taken over the Zab on a primitive ferry, a punt equipped with pontoons; the ferry is attached by a pulley block to a cable over the river, and the current drags it across, the pontoons being turned obliquely to the stream. That day, however, the water in the river was so high that it overflowed its banks extensively and the current was so violent that the ferry could not be used; it was impossible to go on. However, from the heights of the mountains between Dokan and Mirza Rustam, we obtained our first impression of Dasht-i-Bitwain, an extensive river plain surrounded on all sides by ridges immediately to the east, the blue heights of the Kolara range, still with snow on the topmost summits, and behind them the Zagros with peaks up to 13,000 feet high, completely clad in glittering snow. Through the plain the Zab wound towards the north-east, further upstream, to disappear in the gorge at Darbandi-Ramkan; across the plain this pass could be seen as a sharp cleft in the nearest mountain range. Up on the mountain slopes scattered villages could be described, all built in the same style as Topzawa above Dokan (Plate 9 [a]). On the floor of the plain, the greenest country I had seen in Iraq, tell after tell threw its shadow. When the Assyrians once upon a time arrived here, they would assuredly have found a local population that had taken full advantage of the fertility of the area, and would undoubtedly have been ready to defend their green land against foreign interference. I had for so long imagined this moment

seeing Dasht-i-Bitwain for the first time before my very eyes and was now moved by feelings belonging more properly to the explorer than to the archaeologist; those lines of Keats came into my mind:



MAP OF THE DASHT-I-BITWAIN PLAIN SOUTH OF RANIA.

⊙ Modern town. ○ Modern village. ▲ Ruins of ancient town.

The heights given for mountains are approximate.

Then felt I like some watcher of the skies. When a new planet swims into his ken and the Rania plain became 'a peak in Darien'. It is a fact that

few European travellers have visited this remote spot. Its inaccessibility has kept it off the beaten tracks. The only access from the south is over the mountains between Dokan and Mirza Rustam or—on foot—along the Zab, where the river rushes through the gorge at Torba; from the east, Darband-i-Ramkan forms a natural gateway; here a small track on either side of the river can be traversed. From the west, the plain can be reached by a pass in the mountains between Koi Sanjaq and the upper reaches of the Baslam, a tributary of the Zab. All these places can, however, easily be defended, and the route normally used between Koi Sanjaq and Sulaimaniya has never run via Rania, but to the westward of the mountains above Dokan. In 1957 there were only a few available reports written by travellers who had visited Dasht-i-Bitwain. Just as the Dokan expedition had finished its work, the Oxford University Press brought out a book by C. J. Edmonds: Kurds, Turks and Arabs (London, 1957), which it would have been particularly useful to have been able to consult; Edmonds was stationed in the Rania area for a time in the 1920's when the newly established state of Iraq was a British mandate, and boundary commissions were working to determine the territory that was to become the kingdom and later the Republic of Iraq. He had acquired comprehensive local knowledge, but the book appeared too late for the Dokan Expedition. I had Wright's article in my mind; but was it credible that Sargon, who mentions only one crossing of the Little Zab, should march due east from Erbil and obtain access to the plain through the pass between Koi and Rania? Then he would only have needed to cross the Zab once between Kalah (Nimrud) and Erbil. Would a tell now soon reveal whether we stood on an Assyrian military road?

In the autumn of 1956, the Iraq Directorate of Antiquities had begun excavations at four different places in Dasht-i-Bitwain, and we learned the results of these trial digs when we were in Baghdad. Only at one place, Tell Bazmusian, were inscriptions found, namely a few fragments of cuneiform tablets. When, later in 1959, I had access to these texts and published them in the Iraqi periodical Sumer, it was clear that they were fragments of letters of the Middle Assyrian period. In 1957 all I knew was that there did exist some evidence of Assyrian influence at Bazmusian. The tell that attracted us most was a hill called Tell Shemshira. Its position was marked on the map the Iraqi archaeologists had prepared; but neither at Dokan nor at Mirza Rustam, even among the Kurds, was there anyone who had ever heard of it.

According to the map, Shemshira should have been on the Zab where the river swings to the south, a short distance to the west of Darband; according to the information supplied, it was quite a high conical tell, among whose advantages was the fact that the excavated earth could be deposited in the river bed, thus making it possible to avoid encumbering cultivated fields. Even at first sight it seemed from the map that its strategic position must have been well suited for a fort that was to protect the plain against attack from the east through the gorge at Darband.

On 10 May, we had to return from Mirza Rustam to Dokan without having caught a glimpse of Tell Shemshira. We spent the following few days in carrying out certain formalities; at Sulaimaniya, we presented ourselves to the mutasarrif, the district governor of the Sulaimaniya lima, as well as to the police authorities who had to be informed of our presence. On 13 May, Professor Ingholt joined us; the day after, we received a message that the Zab had gone down so much that the Mirza Rustam ferry could be used, and so on that day we reached Rania and visited the village of Boskin, where we paid a courtesy call on Sheikh Hussein, who owned most of the land between the river and Rania. The crossing of the Zab at Mirza Rustam seemed indeed quite feasible, but I hesitated to drive the Land-Rover off the ferry on to the eastern bank of the river, for immediately beyond the bank a new river seemed to have formed as a result of the high water of the previous days, and I should have regarded it as impossible to force a way through this obstacle. It was at this moment that I understood how the Turukkaeans had been able to give Ishme-Dagan the slip by putting the river, with its unpredictable rise and fall, between themselves and their pursuers. Petros, a Christian Arab, whom we had brought from Nimrud as a mechanic and Jack-of-all-trades, was with us in the vehicle; he shared the optimism of his fellow-Arabs and was thus quite unable to anticipate that this unexpected stretch of water might swallow up the vehicle and ourselves. Only his sanguine 'Yallah! Yallah!', accompanied by encouraging hand signals to drive on, induced me to plunge the Land-Rover into the scarcely inviting water that quickly rose over the floor of the vehicle. Miraculously, we reached the other side without the engine stalling, but I wished we had had an amphibious tank at our disposal. From Mirza Rustam to Darband-i-Ramkan, where the road passes over the plain without any considerable rise or fall, we drove for the first half-hour without any sign of braking

action from the sodden brake-drums. At Darband the river is narrower but the current stronger than at Mirza Rustam; here too, the crossing is achieved by means of a punt. Darband is connected with Rania by an earth road, the only disadvantage of which is the innumerable quantity of stones and potholes; it runs alongside the mountain range that forms the eastern boundary of the plain. On 16 May we had completed all our preparations at Dokan; the expedition's equipment was loaded on a lorry, and the little convoy moved north in search of Tell Shemshira and, perhaps, the lost traces of the Assyrian army. In Boskin we found a man who claimed to be able to guide us to Shemshira; on 17 May we were fortunate enough to get the Land-Rover as far as the spot on the Zab where the hill was reported to lie. The going was still extraordinarily difficult after the winter rains; the Land-Rover kept sinking in up to the axles; only a vehicle with four-wheel drive and an unusual capacity for taking advantage of the driving-force of the engine could have completed the trip at all. At last we saw Shemshira, a grass-covered tell, whose flat summit rose some 115 feet above the surrounding countryside. It was like having one's dream come true. On the steep sides and on the summit of the tell it was possible to pick up sherds of prehistoric pottery. Here lay the centre of operations of the Dokan expedition. The day after the first visit, we had the lorry with our equipment towed to Shemshira with the help of two tractors that Petros organized at Rania, and on that same day—18 May—we pitched camp. During the night the rain lashed the tents and the thunder rumbled among the mountains. The howl of wolves was heard such a short distance away that on the next day we engaged two Kurds from Boskin armed with rifles to maintain a night-watch in the camp. Soon Abd al-Halaf arrived with eight other Arabs from Shirgit—our trained assistants for the forthcoming excavations—and the labour force of locally recruited Kurdish workmen was gradually brought up to the number of about 40 men from Boskin, Kurago, and other villages in the area. Plate 11 (b) shows Tell Shemshira at this time, when the turves of grass on the summit of the hill had been removed and steps had been cut in its steep sides to facilitate ascent and descent. On Plate 12 (a) can be seen the camp of the Dokan Expedition; the tents have been erected on a low rise on the other side of a depression that separates it from the tell. A later investigation demonstrated that this was also a tell; our camp was actually pitched on the ruins of a second

millennium building, in which pottery was found in 1958 strongly reminiscent of the types known from the Nuzi of the time of the kingdom of Mittanni.

Conditions in the Rania plain soon began to answer to the description I had received the previous year. The first two snakes were killed in my tent in the course of the first week. One of the other tents became the particular object of the attention of scorpions, most frequently of the poisonous green variety that can immediately be recognized as venomous, less often the black ones whose sting is frequently fatal. I do not think our bag for one night ever reached Edmonds' record of 35 which he achieved in the 1920's when he lived in a house near Darband; but we were quite satisfied with our share. A particular annoyance that fell to our lot, and one that became steadily more aggravating, consisted of continuous visits from creatures resembling spiders, light red, hairy, up to four inches long, of a particularly repulsive appearance, with a beak-like extension of the head; the Arabs called them 'ankabut, 'spiders'. Later, an English biologist in Baghdad, when I had described them to him, told me that their zoological name is solfugidae. They were apt to appear at sunset and moved with the speed of lightning across one's table or up under the tent canvas; I had nightmares that one would fall down my back inside my shirt. The mosquitoes were less trouble; a D.D.T. campaign lasting two years had reduced their numbers considerably, and we could presumably have done without the anti-malaria tablets we faithfully took during the whole expedition. For many weeks clouds of sand-flies made life almost unbearable; mosquito-nets could not keep out these small insects, and all day long they buzzed around one like an intolerable pest; cigarettes were the only possible remedy. The sand-flies suddenly disappeared from one day to the next; the Kurds claimed that their disappearance always coincided with the ripening of the water-melons. Later in the summer, locusts of a size—none of the members of the expedition were prepared for—began to visit the camp; the largest specimen caught was about a foot long, green on the back and light red underneath. They were insects of prey, and attacked other insects which they quartered and ate in a revoltingly methodical manner; their specific name is Ephippus galiodes Arabs. The Kurds had herds of water-buffaloes that sometimes came up to the camp in large groups and were followed by swarms of flies. Tortoises were found in large numbers in the streams crossing the plain. On the Zab

we once noticed a pelican, and on one occasion a Kurd brought us a flamingo that he had brought down on Lake Ganaw near the camp; this served to vary the rather monotonous diet of the expedition, which consisted principally of tinned food eked out with vegetables and fruit from the sirq at Rania.

The most enervating factor in the work on the Rania plain was the heat, which became intense as the summer wore on. The highest temperature recorded by our thermometer was 58° C (136° F) in the shade at 1 p.m.; in July the temperature was seldom less than 50° C (122° F) in the middle of the day. In addition, there were the incessant storms, the 'black wind' of the Kurds, which lived up to all I had been told about them. For weeks on end the wind, always striking the camp from the east, raised clouds of dust from the river bed; the earth loosened in the excavations made matters worse, and occasionally we had to suspend operations as the contents of every basket that was emptied were blown back on to the workmen by relentless gusts of wind. And yet there was something majestic about this countryside. Eagles swooped down over Shemshara. The full moons we experienced caused the mountain ridges to stand out sharply silhouetted against a silvery night sky; the Zab wound its glittering way south towards the Tigris. To the east one could see flashes of lightning among the mountains beyond the Persian frontier. We were in a world of our own. Who were the people whose buildings and tombs we discovered at Shemshara?

The two upper occupation levels at Tell Shemshara were both Islamic, probably of the twelfth to fourteenth centuries A.D. Between the Islamic structures and the next earlier occupation a very long time seemed to have elapsed, so that with the third level we were immediately taken back to 1000 B.C., or perhaps even earlier in the second millennium. The evidence here comprised burials like that shown on Plate 12 (b); the axe and spear found in this man's tomb represent types of weapons with parallels in the Bronze Age of the Near East that can be dated to the first half of the second millennium B.C., i.e. between 2000 and 1500. All the ancient finds revealed by the excavations from the time we pitched camp on 18 May up to 30 July fall outside the scope of this book. There was a wealth of weapons and pottery, and, in the bottom layers, evidence of a Stone Age culture that provides new material for the determination of the relative order of kindred cultures in the areas between Sulaimaniya and Kirkuk and the lands west of

the Tigris. These finds were discovered in deep trenches cut in the tell; Plate 13 (a) shows the changed appearance of Shemshara by the beginning of August, the result of this treatment. On 13 July a secondary excavation was begun across a low hump stretching south for some hundred yards in continuation of the tell itself. Here, on 30 July, at some little depth, the first cuneiform tablet from Shemshara was found. It was a small cushion-shaped tablet, one inch square, burnt as black as coal, probably through having been in a burning building, with four lines of text, apparently giving a list of fields; the shape of the signs seems to indicate the later Old Babylonian or perhaps the Kassite period. Since the tablet was found in loose earth that seems to have been used as infilling, it could not be related to the building in which it was found, which now began to be revealed. On 1 August, as the workmen were about to reach a floor laid with bricks of burnt clay, one more cuneiform tablet was found. From 1 to 4 August the clearance of this room went on; this produced 146 cuneiform tablets in all. Except for the first tablet, which has no internal connexion with the others, all these tablets could be assigned by the type of script employed to the Old Babylonian period—the time of Hammurabi. Plate 13 (b) shows some of these tablets lying on the floor as they were discovered on 2 August; one of the tablets can be seen on Plate 15 as it appeared after cleaning. On the right of Plate 13 (b) can be seen fragments of a clay jar used, as was the custom, to store the tablets. Between the largest tablet and the uppermost potsherd lies the horn-core of a cow, but I have not been able to explain its presence in this context. This room, which can now be referred to as the archive-room of Tell Shemshara, can be seen after clearance on Plate 16; only the potsherds and the cow-horn have been left on the now-cleared floor. In the background appears the door of an adjoining room that was not excavated in 1957. When, after the 1958 revolution, the Iraq Directorate of Antiquities resumed the excavations at Tell Shemshara, this room proved to be empty.

The cuneiform tablets from the archive-room at Tell Shemshara were in varying states of preservation. Some were intact, or nearly so, and the clay of which they were made was of excellent quality; others were found in a more or less fragmentary condition. In one group the clay was of a much looser kind, so that the surface of the tablets had to be handled with great care. On 3 and 4 August it was necessary to carry out temporary

conservation work on the tablets, since the finds had to be packed on 5 August so as to be ready for our departure from the camp at dawn on the sixth. The Iraqi Antiquities Law requires archaeological finds to be provided with individual registration numbers corresponding to the entries in a journal to be kept by the expedition, one copy of this journal to be handed over to the Directorate of Antiquities immediately after the close of the expedition. This registration of the archives from Shemshara had, therefore, also to be carried out, and this was done on Sunday 4 August.

The sharing-out of the finds occurred in Baghdad on 11 August; the Directorate of Antiquities and the Danish expedition received their portions according to the Antiquities Law. The share that fell to the lot of the expedition was later made over to the National Museum in Copenhagen by the Carlsberg Foundation and the Government Research Foundation. The cuneiform texts were, however, exempted from this partition, since the Iraqi archaeologists wished to institute a catalogue containing an exact description of the contents of each tablet; the preparation of such a catalogue could naturally not be completed during the short time available in Iraq after the conclusion of the excavations. The Directorate of Antiquities made the preparatory work on the texts possible by lending a third of them to be studied in Denmark. These tablets were sent back to Iraq after being baked and copied. In the spring of 1959, while in Baghdad, I copied the rest of the tablets and, on the basis of a catalogue I prepared at the same time, the inscriptional material was divided between the Directorate and the expedition on 16 May 1959.

The first part of the caption to Plate 12 (a), which shows the Dokan Expedition's camp at Tell Shemshara in May 1957—i.e. the words 'The land of Shusharra'—actually interrupts the scheme of this book by anticipating events. When the photograph was taken, we had no idea that this would turn out to be an appropriate title for this view. That this title can now be used is due to the subsequent work carried out on the tablets from the archive-room at Tell Shemshara.

Even while the excavation of the tablets was going on, it was clear that most of them were addressed to a certain Kuwari. Apart from these, there were about 40 texts of an administrative character—lists of goods delivered, receipts, etc. A number of smaller fragments could not be assigned to either of these main groups without further detailed study. Some individual letters were addressed to other recipients than Kuwari, but the letters addressed to him were relatively so numerous—about 50 of them included his name in their introductory formulas—that it could justifiably be assumed that the archives that had been discovered formed part of the correspondence and administrative documents of this Kuwari. One letter was unique in being addressed jointly to Kuwari and a man by the name of Shamash-nasir, the latter evidently an Akkadian (Semitic) name. Two other recipients of the letters had Semitic names: a certain Nawramsharur and a certain Jashizb-Adad; the latter of these names is of Amorite type. The language of the letters, the cursive character of the script, and the appearance of the Amorite name were in themselves evidence that necessitated dating

15. Cuneiform tablet from archive-room, Tell Shemshara (Height of original, 4.7 inches)

them to the first half of the second millennium B.C.; the name Kuwari, known from Nuzi, from Shaghir Bazar, from Alalah, and—in the form of Kuwarija—from Mari, is assumed to be Hurrian. None of these addressees, however, could be at once identified with any persons known to have taken part in the history of the period. An investigation of the names of the persons who had sent the letters to Kuwari and certain other addressees might perhaps provide bases for the more accurate dating of the archives. The establishment of the date of the letters would also provide an indication of the date at which the chamber on the floor of which they were found was last in use; the circumstances of discovery show that this part of the building was destroyed by fire, since the walls were blackened by fire, parts of the floor were covered with a layer of ash, and many of the tablets were hardened and in some cases cracked by the fire.

The senders of the letters seen on Plate 13 (b) bear names that in their variety are characteristic of the whole of this type of correspondence. The longest letter, seen at the top of the group, was sent to Kuwari by a person named Shamshi-Adad. The three letters lying in a cluster below were sent to Kuwari by three different persons with the following names: Talpu-sharri, Tenduri, and Shepratu; it is the last of these letters—the one to the right of this group—that is shown enlarged on Plate 15 and in copy-form in Figs. 1 and 2. Of these names, Shamshi-Adad is well known to be Akkadian. The name Talpu-sharri is equally plainly Hurrian; the last element we have met previously in the name of Ushtan-sharri, son of Ullum-tishni, a man of the Turukkum tribe. The name Tenduri, too, with parallels at Nuzi, is unquestionably Hurrian; it is, however, less certain whether the name Shepratu should be attributed to Hurrian or to some other language.

The whole collection of letters excavated at Tell Shemshira is as varied as this one group of four letters. A number of letters correspond to the older Babylonian type, known from sites in Mesopotamia itself and from Mari: quite tall little tablets with the back rounder than the front; others differ in being box shaped, with front and back nearly uniformly flat, comers that are cut off more sharply, and broader in relation to their height than tablets of the first-named group. The differences in format correspond to the variations in origin of the letters. The senders of the letters in the first group are persons with Akkadian names; the letters of the second group are

associated with persons with Hurrian names or with names that can be attributed neither to Hurrian nor to Akkadian. Although all the letters are written in Akkadian, it is only the language of the first group that can be described as correct Akkadian of the usual type; the Akkadian used in the second group differs from the normal form in the grammatical system of the texts. The variation is similar to that which distinguishes the Akkadian language of the Nuzi texts of the time of the Mittanni kingdom, in which Hurrians used Mesopotamian cuneiform in their correspondence as well as for administrative purposes. The Hurrian names of senders of letters found at Tell Shemshira, and the Hurrian personal names found in large numbers in these texts, make it likely that our environment here is a Hurrian-

16. Archive-room of Tell Shemshara after clearance (scale indicates one meter)

speaking society in which Kuwari, the recipient of these letters, played a prominent part. Can Shemshara be identified with any place mentioned in the inscriptions of the period, and can Kuwari's archives be more exactly dated, and so linked up with Babylonian and Assyrian chronology and history?

The old name of Shemshara was, in fact, found in Talpusharri's letter to Kuwari—one of the four letters seen on Plate 13 (b). This letter deals with so parochial a business as the building of a house in the town of Shusharra. Talpu-sharri requests Kuwari to see to the matter. This place-name establishes a link with the Mari period, when Jasmah-Adad expressed his doubts to his brother Ishme-Dagan whether the Assyrians could hold the land of Shusharra against Turukkaean attacks. Shemshara is the ancient Shushirra, and the land surrounding the town, in accordance with a linguistic usage frequently encountered, is called 'the land of Shusharri'. This identification made it likely that the Shamshi-Adad who corresponded with Kuwari would be none other than Shamshi-Adad I of Assyria, and this would place Kuwari's letters in the period between 1748 and 1716 B.C. This likelihood became certainty when the name of Shamshi-Adad's capital, Shubat-Enlil, showed up in another letter to Kuwari, for this city was of importance only in the reign of Shamshi-Adad. Shamshi-Adad founded it and moved his residence to it; but on his death the city was abandoned. Further research into Kuwari's correspondence showed that among his letters there was a communication from Ishme-Dagan, while other letters from correspondents with Akkadian names also mentioned this son of Shamshi-Adad. In the letters Kuwari received from Assyria, the strange circumstance must be noted that only in one instance did Shamshi-Adad in addressing him use the usual formula: 'Say to Kuwari: Thus says Shamshi-Adad'. In another letter he simply refers to himself as 'the king'; but in all the other letters found at Tell Shemshira that can be attributed to Shamshi-Adad he describes himself as the 'lord' of Kuwari. There is only one possible way of explaining this lack of uniformity in the opening formulas of the letters, taking into account current diplomatic linguistic usage; it must be assumed that the letters reflect different degrees of political dependence in the relationship of Kuwari to Assyria. The basis for the choice of such titles has not yet been clearly established; research into this matter will also have to take into account the question of the relative order of the letters, and this

can only be established from the sequence of the events mentioned, as far as this is known or can be reconstructed. An attempt to clarify relations between Assyria and Shusharra, and between Shamshi-Adad and Kuwari, therefore bristles with difficulties.

In the longest of the letters from Shamshi-Adad to Kuwari that were found in the archive-room of Tell-Shemshara, probably the earliest in the series, the Assyrian king gives a survey of his relations with a certain Jashub-Adad, who is called 'the Ahazaean'; this possibly means that he came from the land of Ahazim, which during the reign of Shamshi-Adad was conquered by Ishme-Dagan after a victorious battle against the troops of the land itself and against the Turukkum tribes that had allied themselves with them. It is not clear why Kuwari is to be informed about the treacherous conduct of Jashub-Adad; but it should be borne in mind that in the archive-room at Shemshira a letter was found among Kuwari's correspondence addressed to a Jashub-Adad. This letter was sent by a man with a Hurrian name, evidently a tribal chieftain from the mountains in the Shusharra region. Was this Jashub-Adad identical with the traitor of whose continual breach of promise Shamshi-Adad complains to Kuwari? Had Jashub-Adad also stayed with Kuwari where he received a letter, or was Kuwari contemplating an alliance with Jashub-Adad at the time of his receipt of the following letter?

Say to Kuwari: Thus says Shamshi-Adad. You have of course heard of the hostile behaviour of the Ahazaean Jashub-Adad. Earlier he followed the people from Shimurrum[26]; He then left [i.e. forsook] the people from Shimurrum and followed the Turukkaeans; then he left the Turukkaeans and followed the tribe Ja'ilanum[27]; Then he left Ja'ilanum and followed me;

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[26] Shimurrum has been tentatively identified with a tell in the neighbourhood of Altin Koprii on the Little Zab. The site, however, has not been excavated, and some scholars place the town considerably further to the south.

[27] Ja'ilanum is an Amorite tribe that had immigrated from the steppes west of the Tigris and at the time of Sharnshi-Adad had their dwelling-places east of the river. In one of the Mari letters, the Assyrian king reports a victory over Ja'ilanum following on a campaign against the city of Qabra. Quite numerous Amorite tribes seem to have crossed the Tigris before and during the Mari period, and there were therefore instances in which Amorites and Hurrians united in opposing Assyrian interests. Jashub-Adad was an Amorite tribal chief, associated now with Hurrians, now with other Amorites. Even at Shusharra there were individual Amorite inhabitants.

now he has left me and has gone with the man [i.e. the king] of Kakmum, and to all these kings he has sworn an oath. From the time when he entered into friendship with these kings, less than three years have passed. When he entered into friendship with me, he swore an oath before me in the temple of the god Adad at Arrapha, and in the town of A'innum on the banks of [the Little] Zab he again swore an oath before me, and I swore an oath before him. Twice did he swear an oath to me. Since he laid hold of the hem of my garment[28], I have not removed any silver, any cattle, or any sheep whatsoever from his land and I have not taken as much as one town in his land.

Now he has sworn himself to be my enemy and has gone with the man from Kakmum. He makes friendship with a king and swears him an oath, but although he makes friendship with a king and swears him an oath, he shows himself nevertheless to be an enemy to the king with whom he had previously made friendship and as to the king with whom he makes friendship, he [changes?] his friendship and his enmity from one month to the next [....] .... Why is Kushija staying with you? Set him free and send him to me not later than the [....]th of this month. Send him to me before the snow blocks the mountains and the roads. [He shall take the road] from Zasli to Shezibbu, from Shezibbu to Zikum, from Zikum to Urau, from Urau to Lutpish, (and) from Lutpish to the land of Haburatum. If this cannot be done, because the snow has already blocked the mountains and the roads, and (therefore) he cannot travel, then let him remain with you. In that case you shall both travel [later?] and [....].

The historical interest of this letter lies not least in the fact that we find the land of Kakmum described here as an opponent of Shamshi-Adad's expansion to the east. Hammurabi overcame Kakmum in the 37th year of his reign, when he also conquered Turukkum; in 714 B.C. it is again mentioned by Sargon II as a bulwark against Assyrian imperialism. Presumably, its site lies in the mountains east of the Rania plain. The letter further indicates that Arrapha [Kirkuk] was under the control of Shamshi-Adad at this time. Of Kushija, nothing is so far known except what this

[28] To lay hold of the hem of a garment' was, according to the practice of the time, a symbolic act by which the doer submitted himself to the wearer of the clothing and recognized his supremacy.

letter tells about him; but the route laid down for him is of considerable interest. From another Shemshira letter, the town of Zasli can be located at a point further south along the Little Zab, a fact that suggests that the lines of communication of the land of Shusharra with the outside world followed the course of the river, and did not pass over the mountains to the west through the area around Koi Sanjaq.

That the city of Qabra had also come under Assyrian control when the letters to Kuwari came to be written is clear from the following letter from Shamshi-Adad:

Say to Kuwari: Thus says your lord. I have heard the letter you sent me. If, before this my letter reaches you, you have already made haste to leave Shusharra to come to me, you are not to [make arrangements to] bring the elders of the land as well as heavily armed troops to me; you shall come yourself alone with your servants. On the 15th day after I have sent you this my letter, you must come, and at the end of the month present yourself before me at Shubat-Enlil. If, however, the case is otherwise, and this my letter has reached you while you are still there [at Shusharra], you are not to leave yet to come to me; do not come but stay there till I write to you. As soon as I reach Qabra, I will write to you, and then you are to bring the elders of the land and your heavily armed troops with you, and come to me. Since [your] letter was delayed on the way, I for my part have lost no time in sending [my] letter; I have sent it to you by return. It was your servant who was delayed on the way; he did not arrive before the 25th day of the month. I hope you are aware of that!

From this, it seems likely that the correspondence of Shamshi-Adad with Kuwari should be attributed to a time after the victorious expeditions of the Assyrian army against Qabra, of which Ishme-Dagan did not fail to inform Jasmah-Adad at Mari; this was the same campaign that Shamshi-Adad had held up to Jasmah-Adad as an example to be followed. In connexion with this campaign, which led to the subjugation of Qabra, the king himself, according to another letter from Ishme-Dagan to his brother at Mari, had taken the town of A'innum on the Little Zab; it was here that the faithless Jashfib-Adad swore friendship towards Assyria for the second time.

As we know from the Mari letters, it was the Turukkaeans who at about the time of Shamshi-Adad's death threatened Assyrian influence at Shusharra and probably these same mountain tribes who put an end to the control of this province by Assyria. However, when Kuwari received his letters from Shamshi-Adad, the Turukkaeans seem to have had an understanding with the Assyrians. Lidaja the Turukkaean commander, one of Ishme-Dagan's opponents in the battle at the town of Uta, and leader of the armies against Shusharra, appears in the Shemshara letters as an ally of the Assyrians.

Say to Kuwari: Thus says your lord. I have heard the letters you have sent me. Lidaja came to me and had a meeting with me. Until we take the town of Nurrugum, he will stay with me. As soon as Nurrugum has been taken, he will march with the army to the land of Ahazim. See to it that siege-towers are ferried down the river to the town of Zash, so that they can be available for the army. When [....].

Say to Kuwari: thus says your lord. When you stayed with me, I said to you as follows: 'As to the Turukkaeans, who are on the way . . . ., you are to keep back as many of them as you are able to victual. Insofar as you are not in a position to victual them, let them proceed to me.' That was what I said to you. Did I not rejoice that they were to stay there? Is it perhaps not a town within our district [which is involved]? [Did I not say] as follows: 'Let a numerous army settle down and let them have their requirements met there.' [....]..... But why are they now on the way without your servant? [....] .... Let your servant take over their leadership and let him bring them to me in good order, so that they do not disappear on the road between us. If these arrangements are not made, and the enemy surprise them, will they not then go somewhere else?

Incidentally, there are some who have presented themselves to me. [....]. The sentenced persons who have presented themselves before me, I have now sent off to you. You shall treat them with justice. Tirwensheni and Zilija, his brother, whom you have kept you shall send them to me; but those whom I have sent off to you, you are to treat in accordance with the verdict pronounced on them.

(Breaks in the text, and references to circumstances of which we have no knowledge, make a complete understanding of the letter difficult. It

seems clear, however, that Shamahi-Adad and Kuwari had by mutual agreement secured Turukkaean auxiliaries, and that these were to be billeted after being shared out between Shusharra and the Assyrian headquarters. 'The enemy', not named, must refer to other mountain tribes, who did not regard Kuwari's alliance with Assyria sympathetically; perhaps they were the Qutu or Lullu. tribes, i.e. Gutium and Lullubum, both of which appear in the Mari letters and in Kuwari's correspondence as opponents of Assyrian colonization. The roads from Shusharra to the Assyrian plain seem to have been just as uncertain as in the more recent past. The names Tirwensheni and Zilija are Hurrian. It says something for the influence of Kuwari that Shamshi-Adad exchanges political prisoners with him.)

The Mari letters showed that the Turukkaean prince was a man called Zazija. When Zimrilim conquered Mari after the death of Shamshi-Adad, a pact was reported to have been concluded between the Assyrians and Turrukkaeans, the arrangement being confirmed by a marriage between the daughter of Zazija and the son of Ishme-Dagan. The following letter from Shamshi-Adad to Kuwari throws some light on this situation. Shusharra has become involved in the political game being played between these two great powers, for here we find not only Zazija, but also the above-mentioned Hurrians Tirwensheni and Zilija detained by Kuwari. There is also mention of a whole number of Hurrians imprisoned at Shusharri, and, at the end of the letter, of a man from Kuta in Babylonia, whom the Assyrian king orders to be sent to him under close guard; was he perhaps a political agent for Hammurabi, whose initiative was at this time beginning to be directed to the northern areas of Mesopotamia? We know, in fact, that Hammurabi was interested in Turukkaean affairs and had deported a man of this tribe to Babylon.

Say to Kuwari: Thus says your lord. I have just [sent] Shamash-nisir to you with news concerning the town of Nurrugum and have provided him with a final report. Listen carefully to the report in its entirety, just as he will present it to you. Hear the words I have sent you!

Why have you detained sons of the realm (namely those) who are under Hazip-Teshup? In this way you turn public opinion [literally: 'the mouth of the land'] against you. Set these men free. Further [I can inform you that] Warad-Sharrim has come to me from Endushshe and has brought me

information. Endushshe has laid a plot against you; he has not forgiven you. He will certainly march against you [though I hope not]. Let your mind be made up. Do not increase the number of your garrisons. As long as it is not Izur and Aluwamadu that command the garrisons, the [troops] will not deliver these men to the enemy. Do not increase the number of the garrisons in any way. All your troops shall be gathered together in Shusharra so as to be available for you. Make up your mind. just as though the enemy were advancing this very day, so must you make up your mind.

Set these men free, so that public opinion does not turn against you; Zazija with his troops, Sharram-usur with his troops, Sharnida with his troops, Zilija with his sons, his daughters, and his wife, Tirwensheni with his sons, his daughters, and his wife, Izzini and Ushtur with their people, Adija with his sons, Huzalu with his people, Du [. . . .]-tupki, the baker, with his people, and finally Hazip-Teshup: set these men free!

Igilishtae has also applied to me with this complaint: 'They are detaining many servants.' Set his servants free now!

As to Ushuni, the man from Kuta, who has been cast into prison, set guards over him and see to it that he is brought to me in the custody of Shamash-nasir. It is to be hoped that he will not [. . . .]; give him a close guard [....].

The town of Nurrugum seems, from indications in the Mari letters, to have been to the west of the Tigris. Its conquest by the Assyrians was imminent, as Shamshi-Adad wrote to Kuwari of his meeting with the Turukkaean Lidaja; his letters to Jasmah-Adad show that he regarded the fall of this town as one of the most important events of his reign. This town was among those that Jasmah-Adad alerted through his precipitate signal of disaster.

The Mari letters give little information on those Assyrians who looked after the interests of Shamshi-Adad and Ishme-Dagan in the eastern provinces of the realm. Two of these men make their first appearance as far as we are concerned in this letter: Shamash-nasir and Warad-Sharrim. The former seems to have been present intermittently at the court of Kuwari as Shamshi-Adad's special envoy, to convey the orders of the Assyrian king and to attend to his wishes; Shamash-nasir could accept letters that were

addressed to Kuwari and himself jointly. Warad-Sharrim's duties seem to have kept him to a lesser extent in any particular place; he had greater freedom of movement, and from his attitude he would seem to have been a sort of ambassador-at-large. He may well have been a trusted agent in the intelligence service of Shamshi-Adad; in any event, he was in possession of information that could hardly have been obtained without risk.

In the person of Endushshe, the 'enemy' mentioned in this and other letters found at Tell Shemshara assumes more definite shape. Of him, we know that he belonged to the Qutu tribe and that he was, perhaps for a long time, perhaps not, entrenched in the town of Shikshabbum. The location of this town is not yet known, but there are good reasons for assuming that it was in the mountains south-east of the Rania plain. While the Assyrians, Turukkaeans, and the people of Shusharra had formed an alliance—certainly only a temporary arrangement—the Qutaeans were lurking in a remoter area awaiting the opportunity to attack the weakest link in the chain of the coalition, namely Kuwari. His lines of communication with the bulk of power in the alliance were the longest and most vulnerable. The letter in which Shamshi-Adad informs his Hurrian vassal of the evil intentions of the Qutaeans towards him gives us a vivid impression of the state of alarm that was soon to prevail at Shusharri. The following letter, of which the whole of the back portion is unfortunately destroyed, heralds the sending of a relief corps to strengthen the garrison at Shusharra, and also shows that there were internal difficulties in the town, which was perhaps even now facing a siege at the hands of the Qutaeans.

Say to Kuwari: Thus says your lord. I have just sent an army of 600 men to protect Shusharri. Let this army enter Shusharra. You yourself shall come to me. The people from the town of Uta are beginning to desert from Shusharri, and the people of the town of Kunshum whom you induced to desert from Kunshum are on the point of deserting from you. Treacherous and seditious [are they]. In former times, when they were staying in the town of Sarrima in the land around Qabra, it was their elders who came to me [....].

Shamshi-Adad's opinion of the perfidy of these mountain tribes is expressed most clearly where he returns in one passage to the case of Jashub-Adad—an Amorite like Shamshi-Adad himself—but a man in whom the

Assyrian king must have seen a personification of the craftiness of the mountain-peoples. Of him, the king makes this bitter, ironical remark to Kuwari: 'He does not know his own words, and the oath he swears he does not know either. He swears an oath as if it were something he were doing in his dreams.'

The difficulties in the way of obtaining reliable information as to the plans of the tribes and the movement of their troops provide the keynote for a letter in which utterances alleged to have been made by the Qutaean Endushshe are quoted to Kuwari, interspersed with several comments. Shamshi-Adad addresses him as follows:

Say to Kuwari: Thus says your lord. A messenger from the Qutaeans who is now in Shikshabbum has come to me and has told me the following: 'The Qutaean Endushshe his very self said to me: If my father[29], Shamshi-Adad's army has approached Shikshabbum, do not take up arms. I will never transgress against my father. If they have given you orders to leave, then leave. If they have not given you such orders, then stay.' Such were his [i.e. the messenger's] words to me. Who can tell whether these words are true or false? Perhaps they have had information from the city [Presumably Assur] and have taken the matter into their own hands, or perhaps they are acting under instructions from their own place, who can tell? However, I interrogated him [i.e. the messenger], and he mentioned to me matters of a domestic character concerning the men who associate with Warad-Sharrim. He (also) mentioned as a sign a ring that I (once) gave to the messenger Mutushu. Finally the matter stands thus: Etellini, a colleague of Mutushu, has fallen ill at Arrapha, and he mentioned the man's sickness to me. He declared all the indications to me. For this reason I was inclined to believe their statement, and so I asked him about news from Warrad-Sharrim, and he said: 'He [i.e. Warrad-Sharrim] has received news from Endushshe in the form of the following declaration: I have no intention of using violence against Shusharra in the land that is subject to my father's hand.' Thus he said. Warrad-Sharrim should (therefore) be able to bring me joyful tidings. Be sure of that.

The interpretation of this letter—as well as of several other letters found at Tell Shamshira—naturally depends partly on its place in the

[29] The expression 'father' is used in the political and diplomatic language of the time to mean the person to whom the speaker stands in vassalage.

correspondence, i.e. its chronological location in relationship to the course of events. While we still only have the one set of archives available from the eastern provinces of Assyria, it is difficult to arrive at a definite arrangement of individual documents. In this case, the chances are that the report of Endushshe's peaceable intentions was not trustworthy; his assurances that he had no plans of aggression against Shusharra, and his (spurious?) reference to Shamshi-Adad as a 'father', a term that implied recognition of Assyrian supremacy, would have been a pretence adopted in order to gain time. For his part, Endushshe certainly made his own alliances with other mountain tribes who were equally unsympathetic to the growing influence of Assyria in the Zagros, and likewise aimed at countering the union of Kuwari, the Turukkaeans, and the Assyrians. In a letter preserved at Shemshara, unfortunately only in a fragmentary condition, a remark made by Endushshe to a third party is quoted. The statement includes the sentence: 'I will have a statue of yourself and a statue of myself made in gold, and one brother shall embrace the other'—unquestionable evidence for the conclusion of a treaty by which the Qutaeans set great store. Generally speaking, Shamshi-Adad must have felt that he was surrounded by traitors in these areas. Kuwari must have written the truth, or what he took for the truth, to Shamshi-Adad about the man Hazip-Teshup whose arrest had earned him a reprimand and whose release was ordered; for in his reply the Assyrian king writes: 'Regarding Hazip-Teshup of whose treachery you have written to me, since you have written to me of his treachery, then let him die; why should he live? Let him die in prison. Indeed he is continually writing to his town [and inciting it] to revolt. . . .'

Even Kuwari himself does not seem to have been a completely reliable ally. If occasionally he neglected to report important matters to his Assyrian master, this may be due to forgetfulness; if his reports were delayed, this may be attributed to the difficulty of the roads or to interference with his intelligence service by hostile tribes; but it could of course also be due to guile and be connected with deliberate delay aimed against the Assyrian king's interests. Possibly he had his own plans that left no room for Shamshi-Adad or Ishme-Dagan. Kuwari was of Hurrian stock like the Turukkaean leaders and the Qutaean Endushshe; the community he controlled at Shusharra was a Hurrian community; this much is clear from the letters he received from subjects in the land of Shusharra, as well as from

the administrative texts found in his archives. How loyal was he, in fact, to Shamshi-Adad? Could he really have been sympathetic to the idea of a Great Assyrian Empire that would include a whole range of Hurrian communities as vassal states?

In the activities he directed against Shikshabbum he was presumably loyal to Assyria, inasmuch as a victory over that town would be to his own advantage; and he was not averse to scheming against Shikshabburn with an Akkadian named Etellum, from whom he received various communications on the subject, some of them couched in very flowery language: 'Shikshabbum is your enemy. In its relation to you and to me it is sick! Let us make a joint effort to surround Shikshabbum.' 'Let us surround Shikshabbum and so acquire renown in the eyes of our master.' 'Why are you idle in the matter of Shikshabbum? In former times, when that land was hostile, your whip cracked over them and you gave them no time to breathe.' 'Why do you not come to me? The king keeps on writing to you as he has for a long time: "Kuwari has still not come!" As soon as you have heard this my letter, ...

From different quarters elsewhere Kuwari received repeated invitations to conclude friendship with the Lullaean kings, princes of Lullu. All the available evidence suggests that among the areas included in this kingdom were the districts south of the present Sulaimaniya, where Naram-Sin of Akkad had fought against the land of Lullubum. These suggestions are particularly evident in two very detailed letters from a certain Shepratu: one is shown on Plate 15, and in copy-form in Figs. 1 and 2. These letters treat of several different subjects, among them deliveries of corn to armies on the march—the land of Shusharra seems to have been a granary for its allies—but they also involve Kuwari in matters of high policy, and among the subjects on which information is given in this connexion is that of affairs in far-away Elam.

The Rania plain consists geologically of deposits laid down in a lake that covered the area in the remote past. The transformation of the plain into a reservoir has cost Kurdistan one of its most fertile areas. It may well have been this very fertility that caused the land of Shusharra to be coveted from many quarters at the time of Shamshi-Adad. Kuwari's home-town seems at the same time to have been an important focus of trade in metals and ores

as well as a centre for metal-working. Bronze axes and spears like those shown in Plate 12 (h) may very well have been made at Shusharri, for in 1958 continuation of the excavations on the tell, conducted under Iraqi auspices, led to the discovery of a stone mould for the casting of axe-heads of a similar type. The texts, too, speak of stores of tin or tin ore to be used in the making of bronze. In his archives, for instance, the following letter was found, apparently addressed to one of his men from a Hurrian correspondent:

Say to Kullu: Thus says Bishente, your father[30]. I have requisitioned spear shafts from Kusanarim, [from its] king, and he has sent me five thousand spear shafts. I now (wish to) have a tongue [i.e. metal heads] made for the spear shafts but I have no tin available. Let my son not withhold from me the tin that I have requisitioned. The tin my son will give me will make me as strong [i.e. will mean as much to me] as twenty thousand warriors. Now do your father a service (that will have effect) for all time, and let my son send as quickly as possible the tin that I have requisitioned, so that I can put in hand the work on the spear shafts.'

Assyrian mastery of Shusharra can hardly have been of long duration. In relation to events in Assyria, it must be assumed that Kuwari became an Assyrian vassal at the time of the greatest extent of Shamshi-Adad's power, possibly after the capture of Qabri and perhaps as part of the Assyrian policy of expansion in the direction of that city. Five years before Shamshi-Adad's death, Qabra was taken by Eshnunna. None of the letters found in Kuwari's archives seems to belong to any period when Qabri was not an Assyrian base, and it is therefore most probable that Kuwari's correspondence should be dated to the years before 1721 B.C. Only one letter, sent at the time when Ishme-Dagan informed his brother Jasmah-Adad at Mari of his accession to the throne, shows that even in 1716 Assyria exercised an uncertain control over Shusharra; it also suggests that this, the eastern province of the empire founded by Shamshi-Adad, was then on the point of being lost to Assyria.

What lay in store in after-times?

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[30] The writer suggests by describing himself as 'father' of the recipient that the latter was his subordinate. The same concept causes him to address him not as 'you' but to use the third person—my son'.

In 1691 B.C. Hammurabi of Babylon conquered the Turukkum tribes, the land of Kakmum and the land of Subartu; we can assume that some influence from southern Mesopotamia then began to be felt in Kurdistan. This assumption was to some extent confirmed when the Iraq Directorate of Antiquities continued the work of the Dokan Expedition at Tell Shemshara. In another room in Kuwari's palace there were found well over a hundred cuneiform tablets—all administrative texts—no letters which, to judge by the writing and language, must have belonged to a period later than that of Kuwari. In one of these texts mention is made of a payment to an envoy from Babylon. It is possible that, after the end of Assyrian supremacy, Shusharri joined a confederation of Hurrian states which for some time after the military success of Babylon over Turukkum acknowledged some kind of dependence on the Babylonian empire.

For northern Mesopotamia, however, the future belonged essentially to Mittaani. After about 1650 B.C. there began the armed Hurrian expansion that was to lead in the course of 150 years or so to the consolidation of the kingdom of Mittanni and to its domination of the whole of northern Mesopotamia from the Zagros mountains to the Mediterranean. The starting-points of this expansion were the Hurrian kingdoms, great and small, in the Zagros; the archives of Kuwari have made us somewhat better acquainted with these kingdoms than before. Political and military leaders of Hurrian mountain tribes—men like Zazija and Lidaja of Turukkum, the Qutaean Endushshe, the kings of the Lullu tribe, Kuwari of Shusharri—must have made common cause and formed confederacies that continually grew in extent. Eventually the allies could successfully set aside their mutual differences and combine in aggression on a really large scale, resulting in the conquest of northern Mesopotamia. Was it perhaps not until Indo-Iranian warriors assumed the military leadership of the Hurrian peoples that this collection of individualists, this alliance of tribes, was able to achieve a common purpose? The names found in the documents of Kuwari's archives do not seem to suggest that there were any Indo-Europeans present at Shusharri in his time. It will be a task for the future to conduct a successful excavation somewhere in the Zagros mountains that will extend the knowledge that Tell Shemshara has given us of one of the early Hurrian kingdoms in Iraqi Kurdistan.

Assyrian Historiography

THE cuneiform tablets—letters to and from Assyrian and Babylonian kings, letters exchanged between princes, vassals, and viceroys, and letters from anonymous members of society—these texts have built up a picture of a series of events considered important by the men of old, events that give us a glimpse of the course of history in ancient Mesopotamia. The picture may be described as flickering and kaleidoscopic; the arrangement of the assorted contributions in a definite order of development is uncertain. But seldom does the picture stand out clearly before our eyes.

The letters are fragments of Mesopotamian history. Research into these historical documents continues to be the task of Assyriologists. Diligence, patience, and understanding for the evidence of the texts, a feeling for the extent and at the same time the limitation of their value as historical sources, and the occasional lucky find eventually lead us to the point at which one interpretation is certain and all the others impossible; if all is possible and nothing certain, we have strayed far from the methods of true scientific research.

How far then can the official inscriptions of the Mesopotamian kings serve as a corrective in work on the collection of letters in the archives? To what extent dare we link the scattered information in the letters to the systematic account that is found in the annals? Was there an official historiography to give us a key to the solution of these problems? Are the details given in the inscriptions really true?

If a Mesopotamian ruler left behind a relief carved on a rock face in a distant region, and provided it with a signed inscription, it naturally implies that those concerned had really been on the spot. More permanent effects of such an expedition may appear in the discovery of letters or business documents as evidence that the military enterprise was followed by penetration of a political or mercantile character. The written relics of other countries, if available, can confirm, modify, or invalidate the official Mesopotamian accounts, just as the adoption of Mesopotamian cultural elements can enlighten us as to the true situation.

For the Babylonians and Assyrians, 'history' meant accounts of the achievements of their kings. For the Israelites, 'history' was a means of expression for Yahwe; the nations were the actors on the stage of history, and through the course of history Yahwe spoke to His chosen people. In Assyria, the fate of people was of no account; interest was concentrated, not on what happened to the people, but on the exploits of the king, and in his actions the Assyrian king was deputizing for the god Assur and looking after his interests. This fact must necessarily form the criterion for the use of the texts of Assyrian historiographers as historical sources. The official inscriptions were never looked upon as written history; they were not compiled for the edification of posterity; least of all were they written with us in mind. In reporting his victories the king speaks to his god; when we read these texts, we are in fact listening to a conversation on the divine level. Therefore inscriptions in temples and palaces were often placed where there was no possibility of their being read on the back of stone wall-slabs or buried under corners of the building. These are dedications of the edifice to the god and inform him of events that occurred before it was erected. The Behistin inscription of Darius—the key to the reading of cuneiform—was set hundreds of feet up on a vertical rock face; indeed, the copying of the text was only possible by courting death. There are reports on the campaigns of some Assyrian kings that take the form of letters to the god Assur; there is even an instance in which Assur replied: 'If, as you write, you have conquered such and such lands, you must know that this has happened at my divine bidding.' So the inscriptions serve a definite purpose: they confirm the pact between king and god and glorify the god's power. Their value as historical sources must be assessed in the light of these considerations.

The interest in the past that the writers of Mesopotamian history nevertheless possessed finds its expression in, for example, the king-lists and, in the case of Assyria, the catalogue of officials who occupied the post of limma through the centuries. In Babylonia, lists were compiled of the year-formulas that distinguished the individual years of a king's reign, and in the course of time there came into being a new literary genre-chronicles, which came near to being true historiography; no Babylonian author permitted himself, however, to adopt a subjective attitude to the events recounted. By referring to the history of the past, he could find parallels to current history

and thus seek to establish a definite chain of events; so there evolved a series of historical omens. If in past history a particular portent had been followed by particular occurrences, it was concluded that if the same conditions occurred now they should be followed by a corresponding event; but no attempt was made to cope with the problem of the relationship of cause and effect. In the restoring of an ancient building, care was taken to find the original foundation-document and to investigate the history of the building; the text of the first builder's dedication was then piously deposited once more. Among Babylonian and Assyrian kings, there were some who displayed a particular interest in antiquity; thus Assurbanipal of Assyria collected everything his agents could lay their hands on by way of literary texts from Babylonian temples to be laid up in his own library at Nineveh; and Nabonidus, the last king of the neo-Babylonian dynasty, set up at Ur a collection—a veritable museum—of inscriptions and antiquities belonging to various periods in the country's past history. Generally speaking, as far as can be ascertained, the later rulers in Mesopotamia were convinced that the examples of the past were not worth following. The savants of the period of the last Assyrian kings consulted collections of omens that had already been in use in the time of Hammurabi. Continuity in Mesopotamia was to safeguard the Sumerian legacy; the past became a present reality.

In epistolary literature, the theocratic concept of history gives way to the elementary needs of the struggle for existence. In the official inscriptions placed in the temples and palaces of Assur, Shamshi-Adad can describe himself as 'king of the whole world'; in his letters to his sons Ishme-Dagan and Jasmah-Adad and to the Hurrian vassal at Shusharri, his writing is not intended for the god of Assyria; in them we see him bowed down by the difficult problems of real life, in which the decisive factor is the accuracy of information and the reliability or treacherous conduct of his fellow-men. In such letters, modern man stands face to face with his counterpart across a period of time that seems insignificant when compared with the whole history of mankind.